FEBRUARY 13, 1934 10c

New Masses

Hugo Gellert

77 Cents a Week for Food

by

John Strachey

John Dos Passos

reports the Unemployed Convention

Horace Gregory

Suicide in the Jungle

Three-Day Soldiers

Short Story by Eishi Tanaka

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on

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(No seating during numbers)

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   Lilla Kalman and Sylvia Sapira
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   Lilla Kalman
3. A Group of Negro Spirituals
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   Ashley Pettis *at the Piano*
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INTERMISSION

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   Sylvia Sapira
6. Sonata—D Minor.....*Adrien Schaposchnickow*
   for flute and piano
   (a) Andante con moto—allegro ma non troppo
   (b) Menuetto: Allegretto
   (c) Allegro molto
   Norman Cazden and George Lisitsky
   (*Juilliard Chapter, National Students League*)
7. Sonata ..... *Schostakowitsch*
   Norman Cazden

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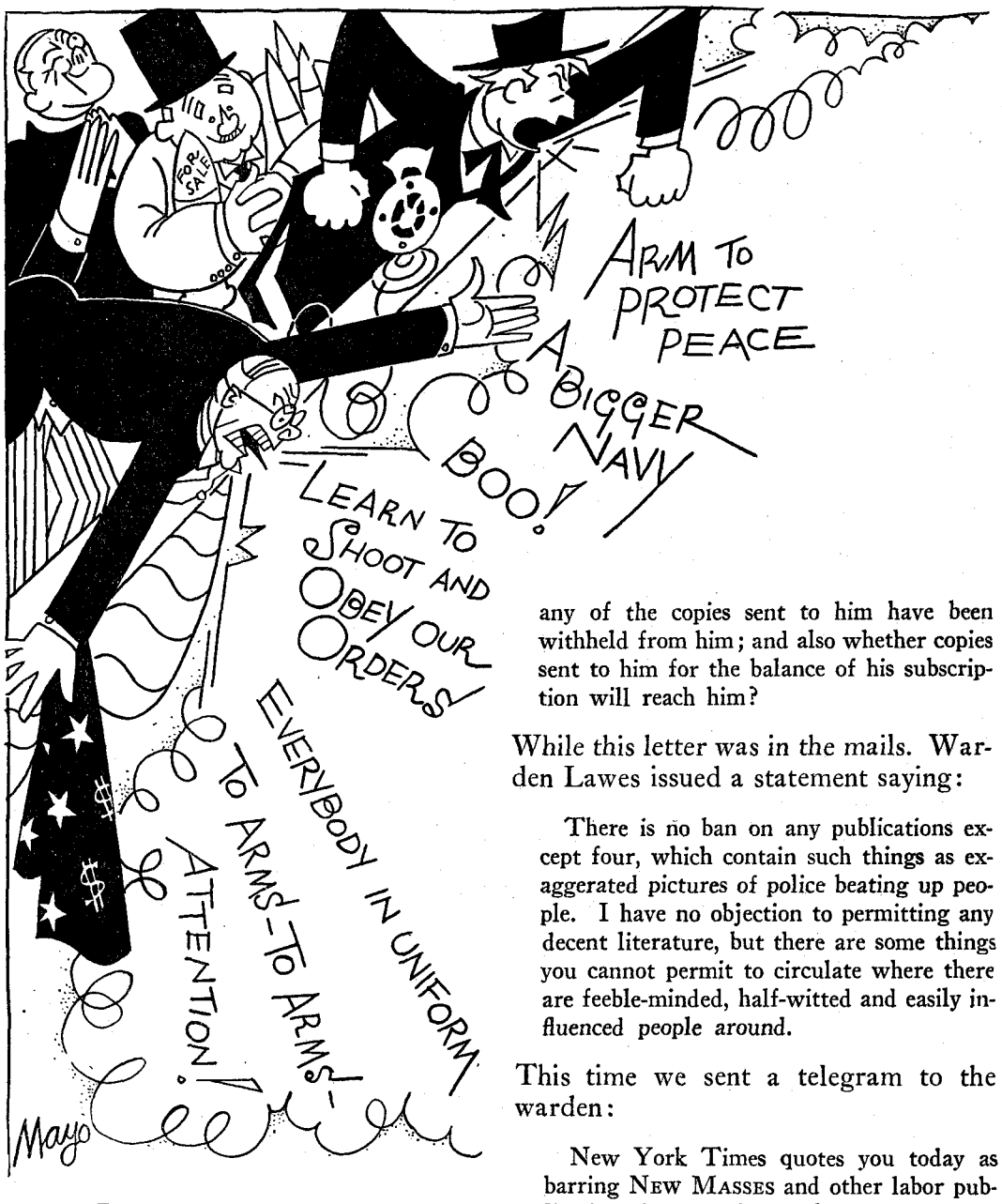

New Masses

FEBRUARY 13, 1934

SAMUEL WEINSTEIN is a prisoner in Sing Sing. He was convicted of assaulting a scab during a furniture strike in Brooklyn. At the time of the assault, witnesses testified, Weinstein was in the Bronx. Railroaded to prison last February, Weinstein is serving a sentence of two to four years. Prisoners work, eat, sleep, and—read. Weinstein wants to read about the class struggle in which he became a prisoner of war. A subscription to the NEW MASSES was entered for him, and every week the magazine is mailed to Prisoner No. 87,-248. Recently we were informed that he was not getting the magazine, and we wrote to Warden Lewis E. Lawes:

> Can you inform us whether Weinstein is receiving the NEW MASSES now; whether any of the copies sent to him have been withheld from him; and also whether copies sent to him for the balance of his subscription will reach him?

While this letter was in the mails. Warden Lawes issued a statement saying:

> There is no ban on any publications except four, which contain such things as exaggerated pictures of police beating up people. I have no objection to permitting any decent literature, but there are some things you cannot permit to circulate where there are feeble-minded, half-witted and easily influenced people around.

This time we sent a telegram to the warden:

> New York Times quotes you today as barring NEW MASSES and other labor publications from reaching political prisoners in your institution. Please advise whether this is your official attitude as we consider it an inalienable right of every political prisoner to receive our publication if he desires it.

AND now we have Warden Lawes's reply. Warden Lawes, it should be remembered, is perhaps the best known prison official in the country. He has been the darling of liberals and reformists for years, a source of light and leading, an untiring advocate of applied intelligence in dealing with prisoners, segregation, reclamation, the honor system and all the rest. Read his answer:

> I am in receipt of your telegram concerning denial to prisoners of certain publications. Before I took this step, I gave the matter much thought for I believe there is no reason why any intelligent person should not read anything that is of interest to him. However, *since I cannot recognize political prisoners as such,* (our italics—Ed.) because each and every man here has been convicted of a violation of the penal law, I am not discriminating against labor and workers' publications. A prison population is a cross-section which includes all types from morons to men of superior intelligence. They range in age from sixteen to seventy-five, and come from all walks of life. Naturally there is a censorship imposed for there are problems peculiar to prison management that necessitates this. When the censor denies admittance to certain publications, the inmate may and does appeal to me. Within the last two weeks, two such appeals have been made. I decide each case on its merits; one request was denied and one was granted.

WE SUBMIT that for masterly evasion and unctuous hypocrisy, this reply is entitled to a high place in the devious documentation of the liberal mind. *"I cannot recognize political prisoners as such!"* An identical letter was sent to the Labor Defender, and we presume Warden Lawes is having a quiet chuckle at the supposed dilemma of the Labor Defender and the NEW MASSES in trying to decide which publication is being barred and which admitted. The NEW MASSES will be represented on the delegation which the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners is planning to send to Warden Lawes next week. Meanwhile, those readers of the NEW MASSES who think the magazine is "decent literature" fit for Samuel Weinstein to read ought to let Warden Lawes know their opinion.

ON Lincoln's Birthday, National Defense Week opens and the radios begin blaring the jingo speeches of senators, admirals, generals, Daughters of the American Revolution, the American Legion, the Navy League (founded by the elder Morgan), the U. S. Naval Re-

F. Mayo

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serve Association. The NEW MASSES wishes to present its readers with a partial list of the past week's war developments: Pick-up in the war industries (stocks of munition companies advanced sharply during the week). Example: the Crucible Steel Co., increased its force 450 percent in the past 3 months. Japan suspects United States: the United States suspects Japan; Great Britain suspects both: both suspect Great Britain. Nobody even mentions the League of Nations any longer as a serious factor in preserving peace. In fact, the British Foreign Secretary John Simon, characterized the disarmament conference at Geneva as "an armament conference really trying to regulate armaments." Atsushi Akaike, Japanese jingo, charges that the new Chinese airways initiated through American backing (the Pan-American Airways went into partnership with Nanking on this venture) have been establishing air bases in Amoy and elsewhere in Fukien province from which bombing planes can easily attack Formosa (a Japanese island).

VISCOUNT OKOCHI plaintively reminded the Japanese Diet his nation was allotting 40 percent of its budget to arms. To the navy's complaint that the ratio of 70 percent in ships with America was inadequate, he replied that Japan's wealth was only 20 to 30 percent of America's. He wondered how long Japan could stand the present burden. On the other hand, in America, Admiral W. H. Standley wished to impress the fact "that the Vinson bill calling for $570,000,000 in warship and war-plane construction," was but the first step in "our program" and that each year funds must be obtained from Congress "to carry our announced policy to successful fruition." Meanwhile Japanese commercial interests are spreading to South America, the economic battleground of Great Britain and United States. The Japanese Commercial Mission "expressed confidence" that general conditions in Chile as well as other Latin American countries "would prove satisfactory for the Japanese commercial campaign." To Voroshilov's speech before the Seventeenth Congress of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, reiterating the Soviet peace policy and its successes in non-aggression pacts (Japan being the only neighbor that has categorically refused to sign), Koki Hirota replied "Japan will not sign until the outstanding questions between the two countries are settled." Then he added with militaristic sophistry, "If these questions are solved there will be no necessity for a non-aggression pact."

Correll

ADD to all this the danger spot of Central Europe: Austria, with which Fascist Germany hopes to effect Anschluss within the next six weeks. Here the conflict of interests involves Italy, France, Great Britain, Germany and the Balkans. And we must mention here, the possible conflict between Germany and Poland over Danzig, openly seized by the Nazis this past week. This brings the Nazis closer to the Baltic countries adjacent to the U.S.S.R. and thus intensifies the whole war situation. National Defense Week ends on the birthday of Washington who said, "In time of peace prepare for war." We remind the jingoes that the last World War popularized another form of war: civil war.

THE capitalist press and the capitalist police are never more ridiculous than when whooping it up over the capture of some newspaper-created dime-novel desperado. Last Fall it was the incredibly terrible Homer Bailey who supplied the blood-curdling thrills to divert a restive public from its real menaces. And now—for the past two weeks it is the penny-dreadful John Dillinger, small-time stick-up man and bank robber who was captured with his gang in Tucson, Arizona, in most easy and accidental fashion. Immediately thousands of columns screech the news from coast-to-coast. Hysterical headlines assail us with desperate adjectives. From quite ordinary crooks the gang suddenly became "kill-crazed desperadoes." Last September the same gang had escaped from the Indiana State prison by the simple process of walking out the front gate. They are now blood-thirsty killers whose specialty is "shooting their way out" of prison. They are charged with having shot a couple of cops somewhere in the past. So, en route to Crown Point, Indiana, they are met by "sixty-five officers" armed to the teeth. "Ten squad cars of police" escort them to the city. At Crown Point an army of deputies heavily laden with sub-machine guns walk past before the jail. A seething mob of reporters, and newspaper, and newsreel, camera men record every detail of the heroic spectacle. Another threat to private property has been put down. And millions of newspaper readers and movie patrons have been thrilled and entertained. The extras sell like hot cakes; the 16,000,000 unemployed are momentarily forgotten; the cost of food continues its soaring flight almost unnoticed.

AND this is how "Poker-faced Charles Makley," one of the Dillinger boys, feels about his trade, as quoted by a Hearst reporter: " . . . one thing I'm thankful for—I haven't any killings on my record. I've been lucky. I've never had to shoot anyone. If I had my life to live over again would I change the course? Absolutely not! I deliberately picked out crime as my profession when I was a young man. I am now forty-four and have lived through more thrills than a thousand average men. I love the excitement and then crime does pay. It pays big dividends. Take my father. He slaved all of his life and where did he get? He was always poor. Yes, sir, I'd choose crime any old day. And I consider myself as much a respectable member of society as most bankers whose institutions I rob." Why that qualifying "as *most* bankers" we wonder? Such an unseemly expression of inferiority comes as a let-down after such a frank and honest speech. But perhaps Mr. Makley isn't as satisfied with his chosen career as he pretends. Perhaps he has been comparing his "big dividends" with those achieved by these other rugged individualists whom he mentions. Charlie don't let those Hearst reporters kid you that you're a big shot. Think what you *might* have been if you'd only used your bean—look at Charlie Dawes, and Albert Wiggin! And you didn't even need to stick to the bank business. Look what John L. Lewis has accomplished with talents and opportunities no better than yours.

WITH the advent of New York's taxi drivers' strike involving over 30,000 men, another important section of the American working class is learning the truth about Socialist-Liberal-

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N.R.A. labor tactics. On Feb. 2 the walkout spontaneously developed when the cabmen (earning an average of $10 to $12 per week) demanded that they receive the nickel tax. Spreading the word "Strike" from garage to garage, groups of hackmen moved across snow-covered streets, stopping all cabs attempting to operate. At city-wide mass meetings strikers vigorously pledged to continue struggling until demands were granted: payment of the nickel tax and recognition of their independent Taxi Drivers' Union (a newly formed combination of four hackmen organizations, leading the struggle). Meanwhile, Mayor LaGuardia was selecting as mediator Morris L. Ernst, the liberal lawyer who had recently fought for free speech for fascists. Mayor and Mediator, posing as the strikers' friend, submitted a plan whereby drivers *would resume work without assurance of either the nickel or union recognition.* "Hurry up, I want to get the cabs rolling," said Ernst as he warningly added, "New York has enough police to put one policeman on each car and keep every cab rolling."

BUT the strikers' leadership Committee of Thirteen flatly refused Ernst's proposals, voting to continue the fight. Whereupon LaGuardia brought on strike-breaking reinforcements in the form of the N.R.A. Regional Board Chairman (Mrs. Eleanor Herrick) and two socialists (Norman Thomas and ex-Judge Jacob Panken). At once these friends of labor sowed dissension within the committee and the strikers' ranks. Disregarding the cabmen's demand for the nickel tax, Thomas announced: "We are more interested in the union, minimum wages and maximum hours, on the basis of a survey of the N.R.A." And Mrs. Herrick's noblest contribution consisted in alienating a section of strikers from their leaders. In a burst of oratory she shouted to a group of Parmelee drivers (already demoralized by employer-officials): "If I had my way I would throw the Committee of Thirteen out of the window." The Committee survived, but it felt the Socialist-Liberal-N.R.A. pressure; ten members favoring and three opposing acceptance of the LaGuardia-Ernst proposal. Newspapers headlined "Strike Settled," as Panken manoeuvered with Bronx and Brooklyn drivers. He had prevailed upon them to accept when the Manhattan strikers became militantly defiant and picketed. Whereupon the Committee of Thirteen repudiated the settlement and voted to continue the strike. And the strikers will continue to refuse the Socialist-Liberal-N.R.A. proposal so long as it promises them much but assures them little.

New Masses

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Published weekly by the NEW MASSES, INC., at 31 East 27th Street, New York City. Copyright, 1934, NEW MASSES, INC., Reg. U. S. Patent Office. Drawings and text may not be reprinted without permission. Entered as second-class matter, June 24, 1926, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 10 cents. Subscription, $3.50 a year in U. S. and Colonies and Mexico. Six months $2; three months $1; Foreign $4.50 a year; six month $2.50; three months $1.25. Subscribers are notified that no change of address can be effected in less than 2 weeks. The NEW MASSES welcomes the work of new writers, in prose and verse, and of artists. MSS must be accompanied by return postage. The NEW MASSES pays for contributions.

HEYWOOD BROUN in the New York World - Telegram wrote about the hotel workers' strike the other day and was harsh with some of his old friends. He commented acidly upon a story which had Alexander Woollcott and Robert Benchley, among other literary lights, being very gay in taking over the duties of the waiters at the Algonquin when the latter struck during the course of the meal. Woollcott and Benchley subsequently denied doing anything of the kind and in fact took part later in a "consumers' " strike, but what impressed us in their denials were the points they made about news-stories in general. They said, in essence: (1) Everybody knows how stories of that kind are manufactured; and (2) You've been long enough around newspapers, Heywood, not to believe anything you see in print unless you verify it. Having had experience with the way even the mildest forms of social protest are handled by the big newspapers, we can agree with Mr. Woollcott and Mr. Benchley heartily, but it brings up the further point of why reporters are like that. With thousands of newspapermen walking the streets looking for work and with salaries so drastically cut that men with by-lines were being paid as little as $18 and $25 a week last summer by the New York Herald Tribune, it might be thought that they would have at least a trace of sympathy with other working men. On the contrary, the average reporter seems to be the most eager prostitute in existence.

THE hunger marches, the strikes, the large demonstrations have been lied about from first to last. It is the fear of the reporter himself, expressing itself pervertedly in "humorous" depictions of most tragic circumstances, which is so revolting. When the New York workers demonstrated before the German Consulate in behalf of Dimitroff, a fellow journalist and one of the bravest men who ever lived, the reporters could find nothing to write about but the antics of the eccentric Daniels, who was then out on bail for throwing stink bombs into the Stock Exchange. When women and children marched to City Hall to demand food, a reporter of the New York Sun found it extremely amusing that one of the banners had obviously been painted over, having been used at a former demonstration. How does one account for such cynicism? In personal life these men and women are pleasant people. From our knowledge

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of newspapers, we are even confident that few city editors send them out with *express* orders to mock at starving women and children. And yet they are guilty of every form of perversion of the truth. What impulse causes them to violate their personal standards of decency?

THE publishers at their annual conventions can afford to prate of the need for impartial reporting. They know that the reporter knows what the "line" of the paper is. To retain his job, the reporter dare not permit a note of solidarity with the oppressed to creep into his story. The weight of newspaper tradition obliges him to write as he does: he needs no explicit instructions from the publisher. Perhaps the hard-boiledness, bohemianism and proverbial inebriety of the newspaperman can be traced to the constant moral and intellectual self-abuse which he is forced to commit in order to earn his pathetic weekly sop.

NAZI pistol shots inscribed four new names on Hitler's murder scroll the past week: one of them the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party—John Scheer. The road to Potsdam was the scene: "shot while trying to escape" the pretext. The four leading revolutionaries were roused from their cells in a Berlin prison and told they were to be taken to Potsdam for questioning relative to the forthcoming trial of Ernst Thaelmann, leader of the German Communists. Another of the four victims, Eugene Schoenhar, was known to many American workingmen while here in 1928 as the representative of the International Red Aid to the International Labor Defense. His work in the United States was to aid in organizing a mass demand for the liberation of American class-war prisoners: Mooney, the Centralia prisoners, the Gastonia strikers. From this latest cold-blooded mass homicide the outside world can guage Hitler's plans for Dimitroff, Popoff, Taneff and Torgler. And it can visualize the justice in store for Thaelmann. With a populace given swastika-bespangled parades instead of bread, Hitler is perfecting a program of mass torture comparable only to Chiang Kai-Shek's. But a class rising to consciousness of power cannot be stayed by machine-gun or headsman's axe: the advance of the proletariat continues. The Communist Party of Germany and its allied organizations win wider support among all strata of an embittered populace.

RIOTS, demonstrations, and bloody hand-to-hand encounters have thrown France into the most terrorized state it has seen since 1870. In centers as far apart as Marseilles and Boulogne, Lyons and Nancy, scores of thousands have battled police and troops. In Paris demonstrators were "literally cut to pieces by guards slashing away with bare sabres." And machine guns and horse-guards turned on the mobs which were flinging paving-blocks and uprooting trees and railings. Although twenty are reported killed and over 1,500 wounded, the rioters have continued with increased fury. They burned the first floor of the Ministry of Marine and attempted to fire three other public structures. They smashed and burned autos in the Place de la Concorde. Long-fomenting popular disgust with governmental action, exploding as a result of the Stavisky pawnshop scandal, refused to be pacified by changes in the ministry. The Daladier Cabinet, succeeding that of Chautemps', resigned despite three votes of confidence, as 50,000 Parisians demonstrated against it.

STRICT censorship of all communications have precluded first-hand reports of developments, but the course of the terror is not difficult to fathom. France's economic and financial crisis (the most advanced in Europe) has deepened as unemployment increased beyond one and a half-million. The 1933 budget is 6 billion francs in the red. As a result of the attack by the devalued dollar, the franc is dangerously near toppling off the gold standard. And France's hitherto commanding position in the European situation is seriously impaired. A series of ministries unable to ameliorate conditions has alienated popular confidence. Whole sections of French citizenry, believing that a cabinet amounts to no more than swapping jobs, defy police with the slogan: "Throw the robbers out!" That they represent an organized mass rebellion is, of course, untrue. Each group is fighting for its own reasons. Quasi-fascists, such as "Patriotic Youth" and "Fiery Cross," are exploiting the discontent among war veterans and lower divisions of civil service employees both embittered by cuts in income. Openly Fascist groups, such as the Royalists, are utilizing popular anti-government feeling to consolidate the forces of reaction. Socialists are demonstrating for "democracy" and "liberty." Only the Communists have been agitating with workers in factories and streets for a basic fight against the threat of Fascism. Meanwhile, the forces behind the government — bankers, industrialists, and Comité des Forges—are planning a national coalition ministry designed to make full use of accepted strong-arm methods. Nevertheless, a nation-wide strike against the Fascist threat is announced for Monday.

THREE WHO DIED

Scan the heavens of our future, comrades
—visibility unlimited!—
you who have discarded yesterday's paper,
you have read how three young scientists sealed
the door of their gondola leaving the Soviet earth,
soared into unknown sky. And went high
and higher than man has ever known before
and stared on the greatest Pacific, suspended
thirteen miles above earth. Their radio
clicked in Moscow
flashed to every hamlet on the globe:
Our greetings to our leader — leaders themselves—
the seventeenth congress of the Party of Revolution!
Was it yesterday or last week that you read this?
crushed in the fog's embrace
they crashed to earth.

And we who grieve, who mourn their death,
enshrine their memories as deathless;
those who break our class-foes' lines
forever live within our heart's vast kremlin.

The three who died, the many who live on,
the millions—comrades of the fallen three,
all—they are flesh of our living flesh,
their bone and sinew, bone and sinew of October.
O huge generation of men who returned
from war to face a newer and older foe—
humanity's ageless and classless battle with
the swift stream's power and the heaven's thunder.

Look at these men in the world before you,
witness the huge film of the burial of our dead:
try to understand, you whose brains are leashed
to a boss's bankroll. Try to see,
O you who grow sightless as your world expires.

We who have eyes can see through the bourgeois blindness
where even the living are blanketed in fog.

Our eyes survey the world from the heights
the deathless three attained.

EDWIN ROLFE.

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MASTER AND PUPIL

Jacob Burck

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Green's Cash Register Tinkles

NATHANIEL HONIG

THE American Federationist may be considered the theoretical organ of the American Federation of Labor. Replete with advertisements from such bulwarks of the open shop as American Airways, Shell Oil, the fashionable Congress Hotel in Chicago, and the Central Hudson Gas and Electric Corp., the January issue gives us the new theme song of the A. F. of L. "National Recovery is every man's job. Grit, and self-sacrifice, and intelligent cooperation. . . ."

To that tune the A. F. of L. leadership has profited handsomely since July, 1933. The A. F. of L. cash register has rung up big jobs in the National Recovery administration. Green has been given a free pass into industries which had barred any form of unionism. And there has been a membership gain of between four and five hundred thousand. (Claims of over a million are not to be taken seriously.)

The huge gain in the ranks of the A. F. of L. must not be looked upon as simply the result of compulsion by employers. The first reaction of the majority of the workers to the N.R.A. was one of illusion. Section 7A seemed to guarantee their right to any form of labor organization they desired. And great sections of the workers did desire organization. They accepted the first union that came along, and the A. F. of L. came along first in most instances, enabled to do so both by its new freedom of entry and by the slowness of the more militant unions. So one cannot refer to any such thing as a "trend toward the A. F. of L.," but rather a trend toward organization. In some of the big industries, however, the whole works was handed over to the A. F. of L. officialdom on a silver platter. The reason for this, and the history of the A. F. of L., in the past six months, will come to be regarded as of major importance in the whole history of the final stage of capitalism in this country.

In the summer months of 1933, which coincided with the initial days of the N.R.A., the mining fields were torn with struggle. It was a fight directed not only against the coal operators, but against the United Mine Workers machine as well. In Central and Western Pennsylvania the leadership of the strike movement was in the hands of insurgents like Martin Ryan. In the southwest the National Miners Union led. The tie-up between the government and the A. F. of L. soon became evident. A telephone conversation between Roosevelt and Murray, vice-president of the United Mine Workers expressed it. "Philip," said the president, "I want you to get those men back to work." "I replied to him," said Murray, "that if there was anything in God's world I could do for him, I would be glad to try." The terror and the United Mine Workers officialdom finally defeated the strike. Their reward was the coal code and contract, which handed 300,000 miners over to the United Mine Workers. The check-off system (compulsory deduction of dues for the U.M.W.A. right out of the pay envelopes) and a clause outlawing strikes were inserted to doubly insure the U.M.W.A. control.

In Brockton, Mass., the N.R.A. representative tried the same stunt. The shoe workers there were told that they were to belong to the Boot and Shoe Workers Union, and to stand for the check-off. But 9,000 shoe workers answered the N.R.A. with a strike, and established their own independent union.

Louis Ferstadt

In the Chevrolet automobile plant in St. Louis, the A. F. of L. organizer reported to Green that 1,000 workers wanted to strike "and I have my hands full to hold them back." The A. F. of L. itself reported in its publications that mill owners in a number of southern towns had invited it to come in. A spontaneous, unorganized strike of 500 or so mill workers in Anniston, Ala., marked by bloody battle, ended up with the Utica Knitting Mills frantically calling for the United Textile Workers Union. The U.T.W. men came—and the strike ended. The full-fashioned hosiery workers of Reading and Philadelphia grew tired of wage cuts, and began to vote on strike action. This was all the employers needed to grant recognition to the American Federation of Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers, in an agreement which outlawed strikes. Previously the A. F. of L. had found the Aberle, Berkshire and other giant hosiery mills impregnable.

In the steel industry the revolutionary union got the jump on the A. F. of L. A lightning series of strikes in some of the smaller plants followed. Victories were won by the Steel and Metal Workers Industrial Union in McKees Rocks, a closed town, and in a number of Buffalo mills. The men in the Weirton Steel Mills in Weirton, Clarksburg and Steubenville, who had joined the Amalgamated Association (the A. F. of L. Union) struck, 15,000 strong. They picketed and fought militant battles. One morning they read in the papers that the strike had been called off by Tighe and Long, the Amalgamated Association heads, and everything left to the National Labor Board. The result today is the establishment of a company union in the Weirton works, while E. T. Weir "defies" the National Labor Board with complete impunity. As for the A. F. of L. officials, they have about given up the battle.

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Ford workers in Chester struck, marched on the Edgewater, N. J., plant, and induced the workers there to strike, defying the orders of Hugh V. Reilly, A. F. of L. organizer. Reilly forbade militant tactics, induced the strikers to cancel their caravan march to Detroit, limited picketing to a few strikers. The strike was lost as a result of such dilatory tactics. Reilly stated only the other day that "further effort is useless." (Let it be noted that the Chester workers dissolved the A. F. of L. local, and mailed back their charter.)

The 5,000 shipyard workers who were out on strike until a month ago in the Robbins, Morse, Tietjen, and other drydocks in Greater New York, had recently been organized into the A. F. of L. They too fought hard. Then came a round-table conference between the union leaders and the N.R.A., in Washington. The settlement that followed gave up the right to strike; the burning question of wages and conditions was left to some future conference. Disgusted, riggers, caulkers and carpenters in the Hoboken yards have organized an independent union.

These are typical chapters from the more recent history of the American Federation of Labor. Carte blanche into industries in order to stifle developing struggles in those industries.

There is yet another salient chapter in this history. The A. F. of L. is recognized by the N.R.A. and the government. Its leaders are given key positions in the Roosevelt administration. A Hillman directly in the N.R.A. apparatus; a Fechner in charge of the Reforestation camps; a McGrady as Assistant Secretary of Labor; a Rose Schneiderman sent to Porto Rico to give the workers there the benefits of N.R.A.'s labor sections. It points to something. As the N.R.A., and the New Deal prove greater and greater flops, the ace-card called Fascism assumes greater importance for the capitalists. The incorporation of the labor unions into the government apparatus—the "corporate trade union" idea of Mussolini, is essential under Fascism. The incorporation of the reformist unions into the government apparatus of the United States is even now well under way.

The fight against it must be waged within the American Federation of Labor and the other conservative unions. Thousands of those who joined the A. F. of L. unions in recent months are leaving them. This is no victory for militant unionism, if they are lost track of. The examples of the great rank and file demand which resulted in the shoe workers amalgamation; the great fight developing against racketeering in the New York unions; rank and file opposition in the United Mine Workers convention, are only a few examples of crystallization of the wide current of rebellion within the A. F. of L. The organization of a national opposition center under the leadership of the A. F. of L. Rank and File Committee for Unemployment Insurance means that the battle for rank and file, honest control of the A. F. of L. is assuming larger proportions.

77 cents a Week for Food

JOHN STRACHEY

LONDON.

THE FIRST impression made by this country upon one who returned to it this winter after an absence, can be summed up in the one word "stagnation."

On the surface all is quiet on the English front. The British capitalist class, which has become adept these fifteen months past at making the best of a desperately bad job, is busily congratulating itself on certain signs of comparative stability in its position—signs which have appeared in the last six months.

And undoubtedly from the point of view of the richest monopoly capitalists there is some improvement. But what is of course carefully suppressed is the fact that this improvement for the rich has been achieved by drastic attacks upon the standard of life of the whole of the rest of the nation. The budget has been balanced, but only by cuts in the wage scale of government servants and by swinging taxation on the necessities of life (by way of import duties and depreciation of currency.) The position of some parts of the agricultural industry is slightly improved, but only at the cost of artificially maintaining the price of food stuffs, which would have dropped, not only by severe import duties but by the elaborate schemes for the restriction of home production which are being imposed by the Minister of Agriculture.

Thus the much vaunted British "revival" is no revival at all for the mass of the population; and even for the capitalist class itself it is but a pale shadow, not only of the overweening prosperity of the British capitalists before the war, but even of their one period of comparative stability since the war, the period from 1924-1929.

But this has not prevented an outbreak of the unparalleled smugness of the British capitalists. During the early weeks of January the British press was full of two subjects alone; "prosperity stories" about the alleged revival, and what is called "the Loch Ness Monster." The American press has no doubt told its readers of this gigantic silly season stunt; but it must be hard for Americans to realize that the world crisis, becoming ever more threatening both in Europe and in the Far East, was for a time almost swept off the front pages of the English newspapers by this mythological appearance in the Scottish fjords.

The monster, however, has now disappeared again. The only recent mention of it was when the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, went to Leeds on the 23rd of January to open a great platform campaign designed to revive the popularity of the National Government. He was greeted by the audience with the mass cry of "Here comes the Scotch Monster."

The revolt of the British working class, at whose expense the present "revival" has been almost exclusively achieved, is, however, taking a more practical and definite form than humor at the expense of that national butt, our Prime Minister. It is significant that

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this working class intransigence is almost for the first time expressing itself through other than Labour Party channels. It is true that the Labour Party, because of its long established and nation-wide organization, retains its hold on the electoral machine. Labour candidates are being elected at by-elections because voting for them is the only way which the electors have of voting against the National Government.

A far more important form of mass activity than voting at by-elections has however just begun. This is the National Hunger March which the Communist Party, supported by other revolutionary organizations such as the Independent Labour Party, has organized in response to the unparalleled bitterness of the unemployed in Britain today. The British unemployed—and in spite of the revival, there remain two million of them out of an insured population of some ten million — are faced with a new unemployment insurance act which will still further cut down their standards of life. What this means has lately been revealed by an astonishing controversy between two sets of medical authorities.

The medical authorities of the Ministry of Health, which is staffed by some of the most hardboiled, reactionary and pitiless public officials in the country, recently calculated out the minimum number of calories of food which it was possible for an unemployed man to live on. They then attempted to show that in certain circumstances the present scale of the dole enabled a man to purchase this amount of calories. At the same time, however, the British Medical Association, the great and powerful trades union of British doctors, was conducting an independent inquiry into the same subject. Now it must not be supposed that the rich bourgeois doctors who compose this body have any particular sympathies with the unemployed. This inquiry, however, was not under the necessity of making out a case, and appears to have approached the matter with some degree, at any rate, of scientific impartiality. This independent British Medical Association inquiry came to the conclusion that the number of calories allowed by the Ministry of Health scale was inadequate to maintain health in a normal human being. A controversy between the two sets of doctors resulted, and we were treated to the inimitable spectacle of two sets of the British bourgeoisie discussing precisely how little they could safely give to some seven or eight million of their compatriots (the unemployed and their dependents).

Halfway through this controversy, however, a philanthropic body made an investigation as to how much food the unemployed in the city of Newcastle were actually getting. It was discovered that when a man had paid the prevailing rate of rent and other fixed charges, he had left to spend on food for himself and family, far less than either set of doctors suggested was the necessary amount. In many cases it was discovered that in Newcastle an unemployed man had precisely 3/1 (77-78 cents) per week to spend on food.

It is out of these circumstances that the National Hunger March, of which the first contingent, starting from Glasgow, has just left, has arisen. A similar march took place in the autumn of 1932 and undoubtedly checked the slashing of the unemployed's standards which was then in progress. The present march promises to be on a far greater scale than the previous one. It is impossible for the capitalist press to ignore it as they ignored for many months the 1932 march.

Instead they are excelling themselves in vituperation and in insinuations of the vilest character. The only newspaper which is driven into the indecisive position of pretending that the march does not exist is the Daily Herald, the official organ of the Labour Party. For needless to say, the Labour Party, true to its traditions of discouraging, and indeed stifling, any direct or potentially revolutionary struggle of the British workers, has boycotted the march and forbidden any Labour organizations to assist it. Already, however, and the march is only just beginning, signs are accumulating of the difficulties with which the Labour Party will this time be faced if it maintains this attitude. Local Labour Parties and trades councils (local federations of trades union branches, that is to say) are already in many cases actively supporting the march. Moreover, a significant piece of news is contained in today's paper. The Trades Union Congress has suddenly come to the conclusion that the new unemployment bill must be fought with mass agitation in the localities and has ordered its nation-wide organizations to begin the agitation against the measure. This decision has unquestionably been forced on the Trade Union leaders, who dislike nothing so much as a rank and file agitation, by the fact that they saw that they could no longer hold back their members from supporting the hunger march unless they themselves, at any rate, appeared to be conducting some opposition to the bill. It remains to be seen whether this new official agitation will not develop into agitation in support of the hunger marchers.

Another feature of the British situation which calls for attention is the active agitation being carried out by Mosley and his fascist organization. It is very difficult to determine what degree of support he has won, but one thing is clear, namely that he has been equipped with very considerable funds by certain capitalist interests. His latest recruit is Lord Rothermere, the richest man in the Great Britain (and one of the richest in the world), and the owner of the great Rothermere Press. Lord Rothermere has come out in support of Mosley with an article entitled, "Hurrah for the Blackshirts." The effect of this support should not be underestimated; it will undoubtedly bring Mosley many middle class recruits. The open support of this greatest and most reactionary of all British capitalists may, however, be expected to have its embarrassing side for Mosley. It may prejudice his attempt to create a working class basis of support.

Finally, it would of course be unreal to consider the British situation without at any rate mentioning the international position, for in reality the world crisis still dominates everything. It is clear that the situation in Europe is sharpening. Hitler's internal position appears to have degenerated to a startling extent in the last few weeks. His attempt on Austria may bring the position to a head at any time. Still more critical is the position in the Far East, however. No one can tell whether the present Japanese announcements of their intention to turn south towards the conquest of China instead of attacking the Soviet Union, is a "blind." It is extremely possible that it is and that when the Spring comes a gigantic struggle between the Soviet Union and Japan will be upon us. The stakes of that struggle will be no less than the winning of Asia for communism or its subjection to Japanese imperialism. In this struggle, the British Empire is the embarrassed supporter of Japan. The continual "stalling" of the British Government in the matter of signing a new trade treaty with Russia in spite of the demands of British industrial interests is indicative of its position.

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The Unemployed Report

JOHN DOS PASSOS

WASHINGTON.

THE RULE is seven minutes for each speaker, but it's hard to enforce. The speakers have so much to tell, the nine hundred delegates in the hall are so anxious to hear what the speakers have to tell. Time and again when the stroke of the chairman's gavel is heard, hands rise all over the hall, and there are many voices pleading for two more minutes. The speakers stand waiting for the decision, too eager to tell their stories to be shy or flattered or pleased. Nearly always a thundering Aye comes from the hall. The speakers have come a long way with these stories, riding freights, packed into chartered buses or borrowed cars. There's a Canadian and some Porto Ricans, men and women and young boys and girls from Texas and Oklahoma and Minnesota and Michigan and Maine and Illinois and Indiana and Wisconsin, from Missouri, Oregon, Washington State and Alaska, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, New York, Idaho. (There would be a California delegation if they hadn't been picked up for vagrancy in Memphis, where a police officer overheard one of them telephoning for some extra money. These days it's a prison offence for a citizen to be even temporarily without money in his pocket.) It's a cold winter. It's been a mean hard trip. And before they started, before their local Unemployed Councils elected them, they'd known a mean hard winter of grinding struggle. That's how winters are these days for the great mass of workers and producers in America.

But it's not to bellyache about how mean and hard things are that they have come. You get the meanness and the hardness of it only in indirect references. These speakers who have so much to tell that seven minutes is a pitiably short time for them, have come not to bellyache about their hunger and misery (though the words hungry, ragged, freezing, occur again and again in their speeches) or to repeat the old-time slogans of working-class oratory (they have forgotten all the old May Day slogans, probably many have never heard of them); they have come to report their successes.

They have come to report pithily and wittily, briefly even if they do run over the seven minutes, their successes in dealing with relief commissions, town councils, mayors, district attorneys, hard-boiled officials, softboiled officials, officials trimmed with all the beguiling apparatus of the New Deal. There's a magnificent similarity in the basic diagram of the stories told by a middle-aged Negro woman with glasses from Houston, Texas, by a schoolteacher from the Mesaba Range and a boilermaker from Denver and a young Socialist who looks like a college football player from Hartford, Conn., or a tall blond logger from Washington State. Things were bad; little by little through the first years of the depression everything that was worthwhile in the American standard, schooling, independence, the chance to move around, good food and housing, was withdrawn from them and their families. They found themselves at the mercy of thievish politicians, loan-sharks, brutal charities. By the end of Hoover's presidency they were sick and tired of the way things were going. But a lot of the enthusiasm for revolt went into the political landslide that elected Roosevelt. Then came the various stages of hope and discouragement with the promises of the N.R.A. and its attendant organizations under the sign of the blue eagle, democratic talk, soft soap and pretty words from platforms draped in various shades of pink. Now, last summer, this winter, today, comes the discovery that there is something more effective than talk and the embroilments of Washington red tape. There are the Unemployed Councils, there is mass action.

When the bailiffs took the furniture out the members of the Unemployed Councils carried it back into the house, or in some cases made the bailiffs carry it back; when the bank foreclosed on the farm the neighbors came around for the Sears Roebuck sale, if the relief was insufficient or charity supplies spoiled there was the delegation ready to talk to the officials, the delegation that demanded, demanded, demanded, no matter if they were jailed and clubbed, until they got what they wanted. Through the Unemployed Councils these speakers had found that with organization and solidarity they could stop being worms and down and outs picking up a living out of garbage pails and relief kitchens, and be respected citizens again. What it took was organization, solidarity and nerve. They'd found it out, they'd made a success of it. They didn't pretend that they didn't feel good about it.

That is the tone of voice of the National Convention of Unemployed Councils. "We workers have been the yes men of the bosses' interests too long, now is the time for us to learn to say No." . . . "We've been lettin' the preachers an politicians do our thinkin' for us. Now we're goin' to do our own thinkin'."

And who are these people who have managed to get together over the snowy February roads from every corner of the country. To see them all together makes you feel like a kid on the Fourth of July. They are a real cross section of the U.S.A., not of the private U.S.A. of the Navy League and Hamilton Fish and the Mellons and the Army Staff College, but the real shivering breathing miserable and alive U.S.A. of the workers, farmers, producers and would-be consumers, Whitman's and Lincoln's U.S.A. There are young men and old men, young women and middle-aged women, white people and Negroes, Italians, Jews, Poles, Swedes, Finns and plain American towheaded farm boys. There's a Chinese laundryman. There are delegates from a flophouse in Cleveland. There are bookkeepers, furworkers, cannery slaves, cotton pickers, granite cutters, printers, cigar makers, carpenters, plumbers, painters, cooks, waiters, waitresses, automobile and airplane workers, writers, teachers, architects, chemists, artists, chauffeurs, miners, electric welders, steel puddlers, farmhands, tractor mechanics, cement pourers, bakers, and a diamond cutter. They represent something like 1,200 Unemployed Councils. There are delegates from the Progressive Miners, from an A. F. of L. Quarryman's Union in Maine, from an Aereonautical Workers Union, from farm organizations, Socialist Unemployed Leagues, the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota, the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, several professional groups, a Small

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Homeowners League in Ohio. There are college boys and youngsters just out of High School. Not even the accomplished John Apostilito (Terry the Greek) and the Red-baiters and sedition hunters of Lieut. Lineberg's Red Squad were able to find a foreign agitator in that crowd. If anything is America they are America. They are the rank and file of America faced by the loss of everything that made life here better than in other countries. They are the first advanceguard to come to grips with the grim realities under the rosy smoke-screen of the New Deal.

These realities stalked through all the speeches: unemployment has come to stay, real wages are going down, America is no longer the land of opportunity for young men growing up to take their places in the world. In spite of efforts to spread around money and employment the New Deal has speeded up rather than retarded these processes. The immediate remedy offered and endorsed by the convention was a drastic bill for Federal Unemployment Insurance introduced in the House on Feb. 2 by Representative Lundeen. But everybody knew it would take more than that. Everybody knew that what it would take was organization, solidarity and nerve. Particularly the young men growing up full of wants and ambitions who are finding themselves lucky if they can get a job shovelling snow. It is the anxious stirring of these young men just growing up, and the thousands who elected them to represent them all over the country, that gave this convention its big drive.

(Don't forget that they grew up in the *New Era,* when credit grew on gooseberry bushes and their parents were installing the frigidaire and washing machine millennium on the basis of easy monthly payments. They feel the world owes them something more than a bunk in a concentration camp.)

Outside the hall it's snowing hard. Snow is heaping up on the buses waiting to take the delegates home. Inside the last resolutions are being adopted, the constitution of the national organization has been voted, the last reports of the delegations have been made. People are saying goodbye, getting ready to scatter into the snowy night out over the great continent rigid with winter. Everybody looks tired but very cheerful. They feel they've got a line on events, they feel that they're not alone in the tangle of frustrations that's the life of the moneyless man without a job. In a few days they'll be reporting back to the groups that sent them. They'll be reporting that if they don't help themselves nobody is going to help them and that there are victories to be won by organization, solidarity and nerve.

Jobs, or Cash!

ROBERT WHITCOMB

WASHINGTON.

THE Washington and national press agencies sabotaged the unemployed, using the Red issue to full advantage. I was present in Aberdeen, Maryland, when the New York delegation of five busloads was jim-crowed. The proprietor of a restaurant, a tall man with a masonic emblem, offered to serve the Negroes behind a screen. We walked out, but the Washington Herald reported, "Police Guard as Reds Gather for Conclave," and reported that a bunch of drunks had broken into the Aberdeen restaurant and started to break the dishes. The Sunday Post reported, "Speakers represent the League of Struggle For Negro Rights, and various other labor organizations," failing to mention what the latter were. The Daily News printed, "The speaker *said* Congressman Lundeen would introduce the Workers . . . bill," failing to check that it had already been done. The Washington Star stressed the fact that the convention was being held at the *Colored* Masonic Temple, in order to disparage. There were at least 200 Negro delegates. Scarcely any space was given to the clauses in the bill. All the papers mentioned that four coal miners from Coatesville, Penna., complained to the police that they had paid $4.50 apiece for their trip, and were not satisfied with the beds to which they were assigned.

Aside from the unusual purposes—and the unusual delegates of the convention, it was much like any other convention; say, a convention of the National Clothing salesmen; a tremendous task of organization, it is true, but conventions are common. The unusualness was in the reports of the individual delegates, and the determination to fight; I repeat, to fight. Fighting spirit, in the best sense, was the keynote, the theme song. The evening of the second day found the convention dog-tired and careworn; the Russian movie *Potemkin* was shown, and the dark hall rested weary eyes. Then came pictures of the Hunger March of 1932, and somebody started singing, *Hold the Fort;* the stanzas were interrupted with throaty Boos for the policemen in the Hunger March scenes. The picture ended, and the *Internationale* went up, filling the hall, a heartening sound. We were ready for more hours of sitting, listening, making notes.

Herbert Benjamin, short and slight, makes the big speech; he is the organizer of the Hunger March, and the most powerful leader of unemployed in the country. "We were not afraid of Hoover's iron fist; we are not fooled by Roosevelt's silk glove. Roosevelt's Brain Trust is as bankrupt as Hoover's commissions. We have been in every kind of legislative chamber for the unemployed—what should we do now? The answer is to be found only in such gatherings as this; only thus can we force unemployment legislation. If the unemployed could be put to work—it would have been done by this time. It is undisputed that there will be a permanent army of unemployed, crisis or no crisis; only by means of unemployment and social insurance can our children grow up healthy instead of crippled. What will this insurance cost? It will be mighty damn expensive. In 1932 it would have cost $21,272,000,000. But this is no more expensive for them (bankers, etc.) than it is for us (the working class). That is what it cost us, in fact, in decreased wages." Benjamin pulls apart other proposed bills to the delight of the delegates, especially that of the American Association for Social Security, whose bill is offered for the purpose of saving money, "32 pages, in legal language, to tell you how you may not get relief" . . . "Congress is not doing right by our Nellie. Telling the government how to give you nothing and make you like it . . . unless you fight."

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Israel Amter opened the convention. "We are here to prove that we are not a bunch of bums and hoodlums, as they would make us out to be. A vast picture of suffering groups, the youth kept out of the schools or from working . . . the war expenditures. The relief in the South is not enough to die on. Two employees of Congressman De Priest of Chicago jim-crowed in the restaurant of the House of Representatives. Terror and fascism increasing, the K.K.K. nightgowns reviving. Is unemployment a divine institution?—I point to the Soviet Union." The hall stands and cheers. Amter also mentions the false claims of the Muste Unemployed Leagues to more membership than they have; the leaders of these leagues, some of them local workers recently elected by a constituency just now become alive to the need for organization as the only method for them to sustain life.

The bill was introduced by Lundeen of Minnesota, but clauses were omitted. Which clauses? That which decrees the funds must come from money set aside for war. War comes first, unemployment later. That clause saying relief shall be given regardless of nationality and citizenship. Immigrants and Negroes have always been on the bottom and must be kept there. That clause stating, "at the expense of the bosses." No, the workers are expected to churn out dividends upstairs and to contribute to their own unemployment pensions. And the clause demanding the funds be administered by rank and file elected representatives. The hands of politicians always become sticky when handling money.

News comes that the delegation from California, footing its way through the South, has been arrested in Memphis, Tenn. Heatedly the vote is taken to send a telegram of protest. Telegrams are read from a united front meeting in Jackson, Michigan; from a meeting of New York plumbers; from a meeting of San Antonio CWA workers. We demand unemployment insurance—insurance for every unemployed person!

A jeweler from Providence suggests the temporary formation of the EAT GREEN GRASS ASSOCIATION. A farmer from Minnesota, a miner from the Progressive Miners Union of Illinois, a laborer from Chicago, all giving a picture of stirring towns, the unemployed organizing and tightening its belt for the fight. An organizer from Pittsburgh refers to Andy Mellon and his fellow-chiselers. Emil Nygard, only Communist mayor in America, of Crosby, Minnesota, in a dark blue shirt and boots; they said if a Communist mayor remains in Crosby, the monopolies would shut down every mine; not a mine has been opened since Nygard was defeated at the last election.

Juliet Poyntz of New York: "Don't forget to organize your women! The women are good scrappers. The women put La Guardia of New York on the spot, and pretty soon, maybe, they will take him for a ride. Army officers are being put in charge of C.W.A., as in New York. Watch out for this, this tendency toward war, this rumor of War in the Spring."

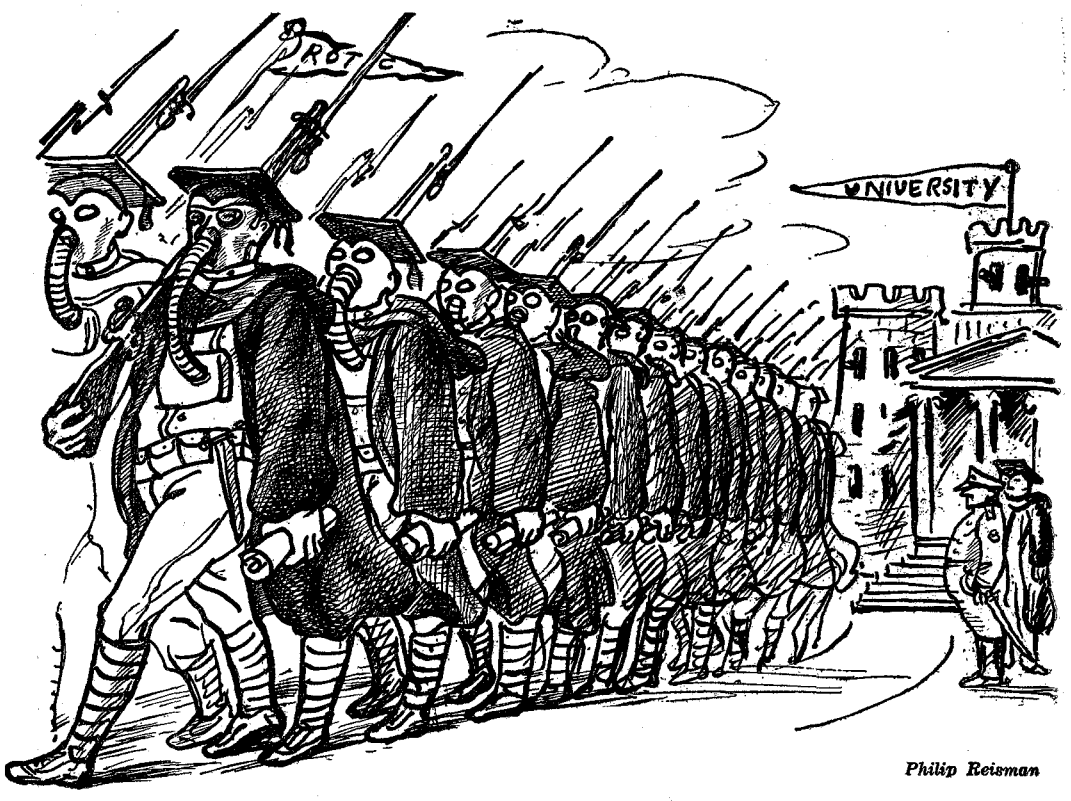
John Dos Passos comes to gather some atmosphere for a human interest story. A Negress from Columbus tells how a hot coal stove was carried back in an eviction case by the marshall's men under orders of the evictee's sympathizers.

"The N.R.A. should be called the National Robbery Association. I am going to fight in this organization until I die." Hands are raised; many, many fingers are missing.

"Why demonstrate?" asks a delegate from Denver, showing a headline from the paper, "Charities Favor Reds." Loyal citizens are those who can starve like a rat in a hole, and make no fuss; loyal citizens are therefore the last to be served. The charities do not favor Reds because they really love the Reds. The national government, what has it done for the unemployed? When they hold out their hands, the only thing that happens is a bird flies over their heads.

Two miners from the strike in the anthracite mines of Pennsylvania. Eleven delegates from the Far West have 40 cents among them; (one delegate lost a letter containing $20); they will pool the 40 cents and whatever else they can collect. They report complete unity of the unemployed in the State of Washington, under the leadership of the Unemployed Councils. "Unity on the picket line!" is the cry of many delegates, unity of all workers, of all organizations, a united front in the New York hotel strike, the taxicab-drivers of New York, the miners of Illinois, etc. Phil Bard, reporting for the conference of professionals, asks, "How long do you think it takes for a white collar to get dirty?" Architects, engineers, artists, writers, teachers, even in private schools, social workers, musicians, all of them reaching out for organization and strength against the forces attempting to cut them apart.

On the third day the delegations covered Washington proper, C.W.A. headquarters, A.F.L. headquarters (where Green for the first time listened to rank and file opposition from some of his locals), the German embassy, the rear of the White House, where local unemployed staged their own demonstration. And so the Washington Herald reports today, "Job Insurance Legislation to be Speeded Up." But not the Workers Bill. This is referred to as "another plan."



Philip Reisman

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The N.R.A. in the Tropics

JOSEPHINE GARWOOD and K. G. D. LITTLE

WHEN Boaz Long, N.R.A. coordinator for Puerto Rico, arrived in San Juan he was welcomed by officials committees and taken out to the fine Condado-Vanderbilt Hotel. A day later he found himself marooned near the capital with a pleasant view of the ocean and of little else. Delegations of chauffeurs complained to him of the high price of gasoline, but broken glass and tacks strewn on the roads, as well as crowds of strikers who had taken over the streets, prevented him from touring the island to discover what lay behind a paralysis of transportation that was both sudden and complete.

Its causes should interest Mr. Long particularly, for nowhere under the Stars and Stripes has the New Deal proved more ruinous than in Puerto Rico. Four years ago prices in the island were 25 percent higher than in New York City. This ratio was maintained during the years of world crisis, which has proved even more devastating in the colonies than in the home countries. And now, since Roosevelt's inauguration, the cost of living has risen another 33 percent, although colonial wages still prevail.

The high cost of living under American rule is the first shock one sustains on getting off the boat in San Juan. The most exclusive shops of the capital sell Fourteenth Street goods at Fifth Avenue prices. A set of tin doll furniture, for instance, that could be picked up on a New York curb for ten cents, retails for $1.25. The cheapest clothes, shoes, and house furnishings are priced like objets d'art. As for food, even a tourist feels hungry in Puerto Rico. He is aware that everything on the menu came as he did across the ocean, and he feels that he must ration himself as if he were eating in a desert. Native fruits are as scarce and dear as apples and grapes. Sixteen years ago one could buy Puerto Rican oranges at two for a penny. Now they cost five cents apiece.

What is the effect of this tremendous gap between wages and prices on the Puerto Ricans? How does one live in a model colony?

The great majority of the Puerto Ricans—the workers and peasants—have been forced to adopt a Hooverville style of residence. The slums outside the neat capital look exactly like our American unemployed settlements, except that they are perched on stilts and often thrust far out over the waters of a malaria-breeding swamp. There is the same crowding that one sees in the self-made villages on the East River, for here sugar must be raised on every inch of arable soil. The building material is the same—bits of wood, pieces of corrugated tin, and all kinds of odds and ends. But these shacks are not the novel fruits of a "depression." They are the regular homes of the city workers. And neither in the city slums nor in the cane fields is any space left for raising a banana tree, not to speak of a garden.

Under present conditions in the Caribbean, sugar can only be regarded as a disease. In Puerto Rico it spreads like a green blight from the ocean into every cranny of the hills, flooding the arable soil of the island for the benefit of absentee American corporations. Puerto Ricans have taken to the sea shore and built little houses far over the tide. They have taken to the great clay hills, where a peasant has to rope himself to a stake to keep from falling while he hoes a garden set at an angle of forty-five degrees. Down on the coastal plain, which is a solid green sea of sugar, long lines of agricultural workers set out before dawn to work in the fields. For ten hours they cut cane, under the broiling sun. They must stand in irrigation ditches in their bare feet. The leaves of cane are sharp and cut like paper. The stalk itself is covered with irritating bristles. (The kind of cane the companies are "pushing" at present is the worst variety as far as bristles are concerned, but has the highest sucrose content). Workers who cannot buy shoes can hardly afford gloves. For this work they receive six cents an hour, now in the harvesting season. And yet the prices they must pay for food are higher than those paid by a worker living in the Bronx.

The agricultural workers in the big sugar corporations live in company barracks, but "barracks" is a complimentary term for the human dog kennels that are set down in the middle of the cane without a green shoot of vegetables growing around them. The worker must buy his rice at company stores, where his $3.60 a week is worth even less than it is in the other stores on the island.

Though the workers of the cities and sugar fields live in worse than oriental squalor, one might expect to find villages in the interior where the tropical peasant lives at ease under a breadfruit tree. But the thick core of great hills that runs through Puerto Rico is composed of clay. Except for some coffee plantations and a little tobacco, they stand in barren solitude, foodless and treeless. Take an average American Hooverville, spatter it on the side of one of these bare hills, put one or two banana trees in the background, and you have an accurate picture of a Puerto Rican village. Handsome children with green eyes and Indian skins stand at the doors of their shacks, their legs crooked from malnutrition and their bellies bulging with hookworm. There is no milk, for the grazing land has long gone the way of sugar, and one must have shoes to avoid hookworm. Sugar is planted in the hollows, and sometimes up the sides at a perilous angle. But near the top of the hill where the village stands, the land is worthless. Whatever good soil it once possessed has conveniently run down to the sugar land that is controlled by some absentee American corporation.

A large New York store recently advertised a special sale of handkerchiefs. "To save expense," it announced, "we had them hand-rolled in Puerto Rico." Fourteen hundred miles away!

Americans from New York have found another lucrative use for Puerto Rico. In Mayaguez, the third largest city on the island, fifty garment shops hum away at New York speed. One passes by an old Spanish house and catches a glimpse inside of rows of girls bent over electric sewing machines. Needlework, which was introduced by Spanish nuns and, as a handicraft, once reached an extraordinarily high level, is now done by machine on cheap goods imported from the United States. Handwork is sent out to the homes.

During a cloudburst, we took shelter in a small hut where a middle-aged woman was at work on a pile of home work. She was hand-rolling large squares of cheap, crudely printed cloth and complained of eye strain. When we asked her how much she received for the work, she said, "Thirteen cents a dozen. Yes, I know that's cheap, but I'd rather work here at home than kill myself in the shops. There they work from seven in the morning until eight at night. They have a half-hour off for lunch. And they only get from two to three dollars a week. You can't have chicken soup on that." Then she made an extraordinary remark. Her daughter had recovered from an illness. "You should see her now," she said smiling gladly. "She almost looks like an American."

A bitter strike in these shops some months ago resulted in the death of a striker and a 30 percent increase in wages, sixty cents more a week. Their slogan now is a dollar a day.

That night Christmas Eve, we saw some of the bosses of the industry. Three fat business men, typical products of New York's garment center, sat dolefully in a corner of a large tourist inn. They were in shirt sleeves and were sadly drinking highballs, listening to "Silent Night, Holy Night," on the radio from New York, a pitiful group of exiles.

Where is the upper class of this tropical Hooverville? There isn't any, by American standards. Puerto Rico is absentee owned. Its rulers live on the Park Avenues of the world. A few wealthy Puerto Rican families, who have made fortunes through the American sugar corporations, may be found in the

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largest towns, but trading, professional activities, and culture are left in the hands of a middle class. Shop-keepers, doctors and lawyers, teachers and small landowners, whose output is controlled by the big centrals, have a standard of living about equal to that of an American factory worker. Monopoly prices that prevail in a model colony force them to buy shoes, clothes, furniture and live in houses that would be scorned by a good American mechanic. This middle class is restive after four years of economic crisis. Vague articles about the Soviet Union, Italy, and the N.R.A. appear side by side in their publications. A handsome edition of Das Kapital in Spanish is sold in the bookstores. A deep dislike of the Americans runs through all groups on the island, and when the workers take the lead, as they did in the gasoline strike, the middle class gives them enthusiastic support.

A dispatch on the recent gasoline strike in Puerto Rico concludes that Boaz Long "was told that his official status would not assure his safety or make it possible for his car to go through the nail-strewn roads."

This is perhaps the only statement that appeared in the metropolitan press indicating the magnitude of the first mass upsurge in the history of America's model colony.

With the exception of one narrow-gauge railway partly encircling the island, and private sugar central tracks, insular transportation is done by automobile. Trucks carry freight. Large public buses and suburban surface electric tramways ply in the larger towns, but passenger traffic is largely handled by what is known as a public car. These automobiles are rented at exorbitant rates by drivers who maintain them and supply their own gasoline and oil. Seats are sold for trips of various lengths, the price being determined by bargaining between driver and patron. American gasoline companies had been charging twenty-five cents a gallon. A newspaper, El Imparcial, carried a campaign against the companies. Then rumors spread that the price would rise to twenty-seven cents.

A small and humble chauffeurs Local, (affiliate of the Puerto Rican Federation of Labor, in turn an affiliate of the A. F. of L.) in Mayaguez was the first to take action. They raised the black flag of protest and paraded the streets the morning of the day after Christmas. By noon the city was devoid of traffic and by 11 P. M. it gave the appearance of being completely deserted. Shutters and doors were closed. Only oxen were allowed to haul luggage to the jammed railroad station.

By 11 A. M. of the next day the entire island was completely tied up, with the exception of San Juan, where a boat load of tourists was expected any minute. Labor leaders and local officials, urged by the united pleas of tourist agencies and steamship companies, managed to delay the strike in order to give the tourists a ridiculous whirl around the center of the city. Meanwhile, workers and country people were barricading the highways. At noon, in spite of the protests of the union leaders, rank-and-file chauffeurs dumped the tourists and made cordons across strategic points. By one o'clock it was decided to enlarge the strike to cover general transportation, and the street-car motormen joined the chauffeurs. All horse-driven vehicles were stopped.

By this time strikers and sympathizers, who included practically the whole population of Puerto Rico, had taken over the highways and streets and were policing them. Some idea of the firmness of their intentions may be gathered from the fact that Chief of Police, Colonel Riggs, finally gave up the attempt to drive to the suburbs after receiving twenty-nine punctures. The newspapers called frantically for a strike committee. But the union leadership was too demoralized to answer. Several days later the gasoline companies capitulated.

The enthusiastic Puerto Ricans are now discussing a strike against the power companies. And how about lowering the price of rice and beans? The N.R.A. coördinator will be busy.

What can the N.R.A. do for Puerto Rico? From the point of view of dividends, American rule has already been 100 percent efficient. In an ideal climate, Puerto Rico now has the distinction of possessing the highest death rate from tuberculosis in the western hemisphere. If prices continue to rise, if the land continues in the hands of American corporations, if wages remain what they are—in short, if the whole policy of Washington toward its model colony is allowed to continue, literal mass starvation will result. Subsidies to the grasping sugar corporations will not raise the wages of the cane-cutters by a penny. As shown by the gasoline strike, the salvation of Puerto Rico lies in the hands of Puerto Rican masses themselves.

They say in the island that President Roosevelt intends visiting it in March and that a pleasant little house is being prepared for him near the Palace. His friends might suggest to him that he take along a supply of canned goods, and that even an armored car might come in handy.

P. S. He Got the Job

Dear Sir: Herewith I offer you
my record strictly confidential;
since men insist your time is dear,
I list now only what's essential:

you crave a man experienced
"who's proved that he can advertise—"
there's not a mortal more adept
than I in shaping sugared lies.

My proof: for 3 fat years I wrote
slogans for Flynn & Schlesinger's,
and pumped the firm with pelf I coaxed
from underpaid stenographers

and clerks and other starving such
not bitter enough as yet to rob
to make themselves presentable
sufficiently to hold a job. . . .

Your firm, I think, is quite ideal
for such a swindler's gift as mine.
I'm frank—but still full well I know
to be forgiving is divine—

the final business truth, of course:
a kind of all-forgiving grace
for those who to subsist must keep
exploiting a stunned human race.

Besides, though you'll suspect that I'm
"idealistic," I insist
I know you too must live! I am
a "practical idealist" . . .

Doubtless you too are Liberal—
we'll get on swimmingly together,
bolting the windows, drawing blinds
whenever there is threatening weather.

Re salary: I understand.
You'll pay as "fairly as you can."
A jobless man can't name his price,
so rest assured I am your man.

Accept me for about one-eighth
of what my normal wage should be;
and as I swell your bank account
please threaten that you'll fire me

so that I'll labor twice as hard;
and with your money and my mind
I'll hypnotize with words, while you
can pick their pockets from behind . . .

I have a vision of success,
vast endless sums we shall secure—
it's easy when they're desperate
to pilfer pennies from the poor.

And now I close this billet-doux
with supplication and amen
that you will lay your choice on me
instead of fifty other men

one half of whom must surely need
the job much more just now . . . Oh please
don't let your heart be influenced
if someone begs you on his knees—

let me at least enjoy the knowledge
that this time I have helped to bring
another human brother nearer
the living deaths of suffering.

(Editor's Note: *The author wrote: "Don't sign my name" and fired at us: "This writer needs a job and knows that Truth can't ask for business status!")*

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Red Front, Comrade Renn!

A. B. MAGIL

WE GOT off the train. It was Moscow and we were all excited. A jumble of faces crowded around us. The band blared the *Internationale;* we held up our clenched fists and felt that there was something big and strong in a clenched human fist. A man stepped out of the crowd, a tall, solemn, baldish man with glasses and a small brown mustache, dressed in semi-military fashion with a brown coat and leather puttees.

"In the name of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers I greet the American delegates. . . ."

Where had I seen that face before? Those calm sad eyes—where? I remembered: in Berlin, at every bookstall, on the jacketcovers of books that face and—*Nachkrieg von Ludwig Renn.*

So that's . . . the author of *War* and *After War.* The aristocrat turned Communist. The imperial soldier turned anti-war fighter. A celebrity. Speaks English . . . somebody grabbed my baggage and we were rushed off the station platform. "Rot Front!"

Rot Front! The German comrades were in the habit of clenching their fists and giving this salute when they met. We quickly picked it up, as did the Russians and all the other delegates. But I didn't really hear the Red Front salute till that day in Kharkov, at the November 7 celebration when, with thousands of workers marching along the street, the Germans roared out in unison: Rot Front! Then I understood what it means to say Red Front, and to be part of it.

The day after we arrived in Moscow we went to see a textile factory. Ludwig Renn was leading our group. It was quite a walk and he took it in long strides. The factory manager showed us around. Renn spoke Russian to him and translated into English, and then addressed the workers in Russian, giving them greetings in our name.

A few days later we were on our way to Kharkov, where the great international conference of revolutionary writers was to begin. Renn was in our coach, away from all the "big shots." He was reading a book on the origin of religions, not reading, but studying, carefully and patiently. But his mind was on us all the time. Whenever we needed anything, we went to Ludwig Renn; he would look after us. Throughout, he acted as a kind of chaperon to the American and English delegates. Nobody had assigned him to this work. Nobody ever told Ludwig Renn to look after the needs of other people. He just did it naturally, with a quiet grace.

At the Kharkov Conference Renn was made a member of the Anglo-American Commission. But he was not only a member, he was our guide. And we gave him trouble enough, what with all those tough problems to solve. But he never grew impatient; he told us of their own difficulties in Germany, in the Association of Proletarian Revolutionary Writers, of which he was one of the leaders, and gave us the advantage of their rich experience. It was this "artist in uniform," Ludwig Renn—the uniform of the illegal Red Front Fighters of which he was a member—who showed us the path that the proletarian cultural movement must inevitably follow and who helped write the resolution of the American delegation which that other artist in uniform—the uniform of the international counter-revolution—Max Eastman, so heroically sneers at.

More than once I heard Renn say:

"When we formed our association in 1927, proletarian literature in Germany was in its infancy. And today, three years later, it is a power which the bourgeoisie must reckon with. You American comrades of the John Reed Club and the NEW MASSES are today at the stage that we were in 1927. But I am certain that within a few years there will be such a development of proletarian literature in America, such a welding together of the creative forces of the new culture as will surprise you all."

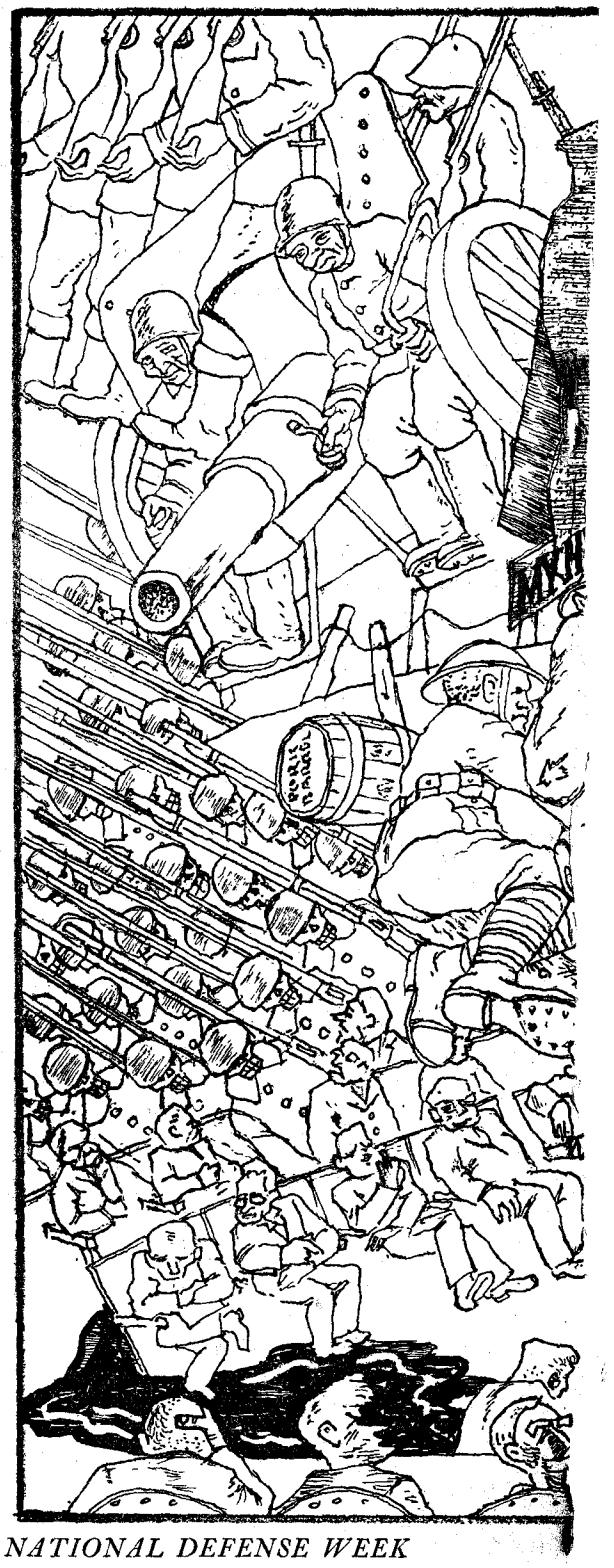
Three years have passed, and the prophecy of Ludwig Renn is in process of fulfilment.

Back in Moscow after the ten-day Kharkov Conference, and tired. Most of the delegates dispersed, but a few remained to be correspondents at the great trial of the eight counter-revolutionary engineers that was opening. For a week Renn and I shared one room.

I came into the room one day and found Renn writing. "I am writing an article on the trial for the Frankfurter Zeitung," he said. "What about *our* press?" I asked. "No. There is a division of labor among us; some of our comrades are reporting the trial for the revolutionary press, others for the bourgeois press. Since my name is known in the bourgeois world, I have to make use of it. Of course, one has to tone down the phrases a little, but the substance is there. The idea is to give the widest possible publicity to this trial, to mobilize public opinion throughout the world against the slanders of the white guard and social-democratic press."

I remembered the discussions we had had in the John Reed Club, discussions as to whether it was proper or improper for revolutionary writers to contribute to the bourgeois press. They seemed so puny now, those clouds of words that rose out of our growing pains. Ludwig Renn had given me the answer.

When *War* was published in 1928, Renn was living quietly in a small town near Berlin, where he was agitprop director for the Communist Party and was about to run for office in the municipal elections. The book had been written several years earlier, at a time



NATIONAL DEFENSE WEEK

when Renn was still a pacifist, but it had wandered around from publisher to publisher before it saw the light. It appeared two months before Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front,* which, of course, quickly overshadowed it in popularity. Nevertheless, Renn told me, *War* sold 150,000 copies in Germany and an equal number in France.

Shortly after the publication of the book, Renn moved to Berlin where he became active in the revolutionary writers' organization. He was chosen one of the editors of the Linkskurve and his name appeared on the inside cover as the politically responsible editor. It was in Renn's house on Kleinblockstrasse that many of the editorial meetings were held. Renn also became active in the Red Front

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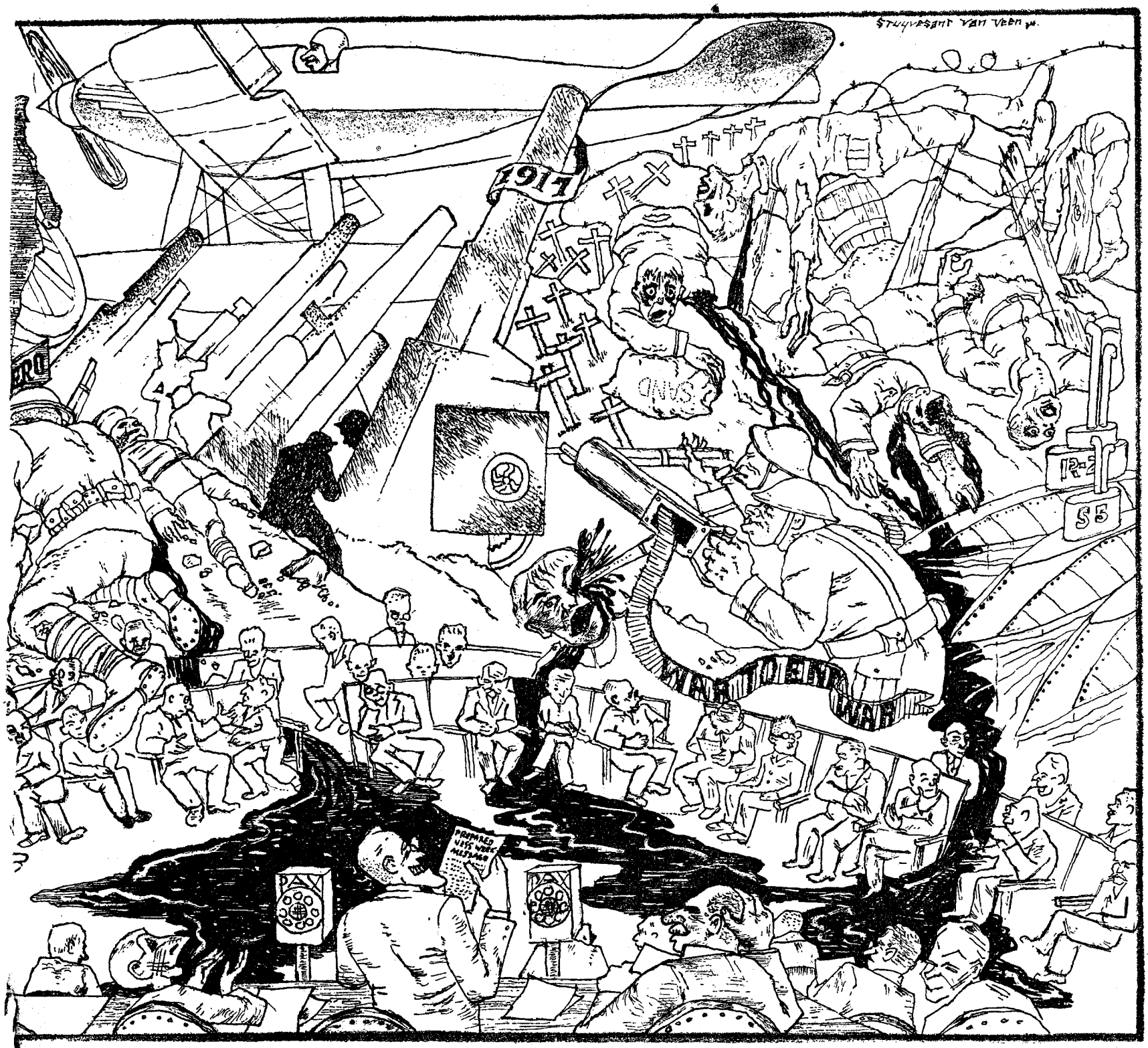

Stuyvesant Van Veen

Fighters League, which was suppressed by the social-democratic government after the events of bloody May Day, 1929. Hitler finished the job which the socialist leaders had begun.

Renn's habits were orderly and precise with the precision of a man who has gone through the old German military school. With this difference: instead of the typical Prussian army bully, here was a man of exceptional kindness, utterly devoid of any conceit, a man of a deep, tranquil simplicity, in whom the world-emancipating idea of Communism had become blood and marrow. He had suffered much—his face showed that. Part of that suffering, part of the spiritual odyssey that transformed the nobleman, Arnold Vieth-Golssenau, into the Communist, Ludwig Renn, is recorded in *War* and *After War*. The best part, the bravest part, will be found in the history of the struggles of the German workers and revolutionary intellectuals immediately before and after Hitler's assumption of power.

When Henri Barbusse was in Detroit I inquired after the fate of the German comrades whom I had known in Moscow. I was especially concerned about Ludwig Renn, who earlier in the year had been reported murdered by the fascists. "Renn," Barbusse told me, "is safe. He is in Switzerland."

Unfortunately, Barbusse was wrong. The whole world now knows of his trial, coming on the heels of the Reichstag fire trial, and of his two and a half years sentence to imprisonment in one of Herr Hitler's and Herr Goebbels' monuments to the new pure Aryan culture. And I can see Ludwig Renn standing up there in the fascist court, speaking unfalteringly, simply, directly, acknowledging membership in the Communist Party, acknowledging himself a Bolshevik, a soldier of the revolution. The corpses of the old world, dressed in judicial robes, stuffed with ceremonial pomp and grand medieval attitudes to hide the skeleton bones—the corpses of the old world sentencing the Dimitroffs, the Torglers, the Thaelmanns and the Renns!

But the clenched fist of the Red Front of the working masses of the world shall have the last word.

The revolution lives.

Red Front, Comrade Renn!

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Suicide in the Jungle

HORACE GREGORY

ROBINSON JEFFERS and Eugene O'Neill are American phenomena. They have impressed their audiences in the same way that a European is awed by the sight of the Empire State Building, Henry Ford's assembling plants, Niagara Falls, the Grand Canyon and the Chicago stockyards. Theirs has become a performance of power for power's sake and bigness for the sake of bigness. Lose yourself in wide starry vastnesses! Even critics are embarrassed by the mere bulk of production, carrying in their mind's eye a gigantic image thrown against a huge screen.

Granting this, we suddenly discover that both men show signs of exhaustion that is commensurable to their effort. We are reminded of two heavyweight fighters, punch drunk, still on their feet, legs braced against the wind, ready to drop at the touch of a feather. Yet, there they stand, lunging, reeling, swaying, sustained only by a faith in their physical endurance against all enemies, even time and death.

By this analogy (not to be taken in full literalness), I mean that they are still writing poetry and plays that seem to bear the fruit of a healthy creative impulse and yet are hollow. Is it because we have overrated them in the past? Is it because their intentions have always been on a larger scale than their performance? Is it because they have no genuine aesthetic or moral insight into the life that they regard so bitterly, so tenderly, so violently, so yearningly, so desperately with a capital L in red Neon brilliance before their eyes? Is it because they lack faith in themselves as poets that they choose exhaustion and the worship of amoral being? The truth will be found, I think, in a mean average of all these reasons and behind them lies the structure of an historical environment: America from 1900 to the present hour.

Let me take Jeffers first, for he is the better poet and his insight is less impaired by the demands of a special audience. Let us recall briefly the period through which he lived and from which he has drawn his irrevocable conclusions. To a man of Jeffer's gifts and temperament, it was a time of shallow, yet widely spread idealism which even before 1914 was rapidly dissolving into a pale mist of disillusion. Nearly fifty years ago in Pittsburgh, Jeffers was born of well-to-do parents and in early boyhood traveled with them over half the Continent of Europe. When he reached the age of fifteen his family settled in Los Angeles and at eighteen he graduated from Occidental College continuing his academic career with diminishing interest at the University of Southern California, University of Zurich, then home again at a medical school and finally at the University of Washington.

I think we may assume that his intellectual development was precocious and that it completed its cycle at an early age. I think also that he realized early certain problems of human loneliness and felt keenly the futility of rationalizing about them. Meanwhile in these formative years the emotions of all America were changing. We have only to remember that the War with Spain produced a general feeling of self-confidence and that this country from 1900 onward saw itself in terms of a world power. This was a vision that Europe could understand; we were a threat in world markets and a proof that individual commercial enterprise was successful. The reverse side of the picture was a spectacle of rapidly mounting graft in federal and civil office and naked, ruthless power displayed by Morgan, Hill, Rockefeller, Carnegie and Frick. Its darkness could be discerned at a glance and the muckraking school of fiction attempted to throw light upon it. We can imagine the effect of this general condition upon an impressionable young man. What he has written since 1925 seems to show that he has looked into the world of corruption about him and that he turned to Nietzsche and Greek drama for relief. More than that, he has identified himself with a moribund civilization, escaping from its taint only as a superman, as if to say: My world is dying; and death is not only inevitable but near. Materialism, the materialism of unearned, machine-made wealth lies at the root of death and is the occupation of humanity. Therefore if you would save your soul, disentangle yourself from humanity; admit that all flesh dies and is now corrupt, its odor rising to defile us. Why confuse ourselves at this last moment with moral laws, now, before we enter the pine coffin, or the tomb or throw ourselves upon a funeral pyre? Our god is an amoral god; he creates both wolf and sheep and destroys both; he creates storm and sun and allows each to cancel the other as thoroughly as day cancels night and midnight day. He is the seed of the wheat and the lightning that strikes down the crop. O look at all the beautiful women with husky Picasso like bodies and red hair. Do they sleep with their husbands? Not if they can help it. Even a horse will do as a substitute, and perhaps be more acceptable; certainly more vigorous, more beautiful than a man who is merely another human being. Adultery, incest, bigamy or just plain haphazard fornication are included in the list. What about men? Beautiful men walking in fine strong Californian sunlight, what about them? Do you see their muscles bulging in the sun? Do you see them throw boulders, kiss, leap, run, dive into deep green waters off high rocks and cliffs? Incest, adultery, murder is a sport with them; and then they suffer madness; and god who doesn't care whether they suffer or not, but sleeps on serenely prepares them for a better thing than life which is death, death which unweaves the nervous twitching limbs until nonhuman quiet and dignity is regained. Then men, trees, rocks, water, sand, grass are all immortal as sun and moon; and what was once adultrous tissue and bone is purified. No longer will this informer tell tales, this wife betray her husband or this husband long to sleep with his own or his wife's sister. Murder is stilled. And the machines which made our cities top heavy with injustice will sink into sand. And the sun will rise next morning and the moon will set at an appointed hour past next midnight. The rocks on the beach will withstand water and toss the wave back into the sea and the sea will throw itself against the rock. This is the world; this is the cosmos.

This rough description of the large canvas upon which Jeffers composes his narratives neglects his ability to tell a story. That story is often so effective we forget or forgive distorted images and weak lines of verse. There are times when we forget that the strong lines of action depend upon the convention already established by the philosophy behind them; we forget the distortion of character; we forget that Jeffer's men and women are brutal, stupid, meaty animals. Less than animals in fact for the taint of intellect and the imagination that builds self-destructive machinery has perverted the pure animal instinct. This instinct performs the ritual of lust or hunger to satisfy a transient appetite and then sleeps a dreamless sleep.

It is not without discipline that Robinson Jeffers has learned to control a long melodic line of unrhymed verse which has its origin in Greek poetry. He has made us see and feel the physical beauty of the American Pacific coast as no one else has done before him. And there are times, as in *Cawdor, The Tower Beyond Tragedy* and *Roan Stallion* when he projects a symbol with such force that it is not easily forgotten. All this is the release of remarkable energy, but once its strength is shown and the story told, there is little necessity to witness it again. Even *The Tower Beyond Tragedy* gains little upon rereading. It is a memorable poem, cast in a classic mold, but its largeness reveals wide empty corridors, and having read it, we are no longer concerned with its dramatic interest. We are more likely to be bored by the repetition of its theme. So it has been with the publication of Jeffer's annual book of poems; each succeeding year we know what to expect and that expectation finds satisfaction upon a

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slight variation of plot. It is evident I think that he cannot build a larger structure than he has already defined and one cannot scold him for not enlarging his range of social vision; to do so would destroy his premise, making him less valuable to us and useless to himself. We will remember him I think as a poet who wrote much that was mere waste and self destruction; a poet who preferred death to participation in a corrupt society. He took pride in facing loneliness, feeling that here through the paradox of complete negation, he could find the positive virtues of beauty and individual security. He made us see the underside of a vast dream called American prosperity at a time when its golden cloud floated over us, yet his own cosmos grew cold and far too large for proper furnishing. He left no heirs.

II

When we note the similarities in Eugene O'Neill and Jeffers, the fact that they were born within a year of one another seems less of a coincidence. A European, unfamiliar with the body of this country's literature and making his selection from the work of these two men, would find the same America revealed, the same darkness, chaos, anarchy, something of the same beauty, the same brutality, the same blind force at work that creates an ultimate sensation, a melodrama with tragic implications which lacks the cleansing relief of a catharsis. O'Neill's imagination is no less vivid than Jeffer's; the same emotional impact is registered, but when we see or read an O'Neill play the emotion is less pure. Perhaps O'Neill's origin offers a reason, for Broadway entered his veins at birth, which was an influence that he learned (subconsciously I think) to curb, to utilize, yet never could he convert this handicap to an advantage. It remains a taint to this very day, a quality in which poetic values become false in their transmission from the spoken word to type on paper. After the publication of an O'Neill play, let a few years slip by, let the image of stage and actor grow dim, and the language of the play becomes tawdry and embarrassing to read. The characters are marked with less distinction; the speech of one blurs into another or is separated by the use of a crudely conceived dialect. Is this the work of America's first dramatist? Are we to read it as literature, even if we accept Shaw and Ibsen as standards? This test, however, is not full of justice, but is a symptom I believe of O'Neill's subconscious link with the tradition of the American stage. He overwrites carelessly and swells his lines with the verbiage of false poetics.

In retrospect his revolt away from the New York stage seems less important than it did ten years ago. The years at sea, the short season at Princeton, the Provincetown adventure seem less vivid. One cannot deny their influence, for they permitted the world to open at O'Neill's feet from which he looked down into an abyss. Then slowly raising his eyes, he gazed over broad expanses of sea and land and into cities. Yet in a few short years he was writing for Broadway as well as himself and the rest of America. He knew the Theatre a shade too well; he was both shoddy and brilliant in a single speech; gaudy, mawkish and genuinely moving in a single line.

O'Neill's value for us and those who have admired him for nearly twenty years, lies in his extraordinary sensitiveness to what middle class America feels, sees and hears. This gift or talent which he has converted into something very like genius is combined with deepest introspection. He is often confused by the power of an unknown voice speaking within him. In *The Hairy Ape* and *The Emperor Jones,* the voices are of the stoker and the Negro, climbing beyond their reaches and mawkishly entangled with the neurotic falsetto of a poet in an unfriendly, commercialized civilization. These voices came at the very moment when America was fitted to see a theatrical aspect of class warfare and the Negro problem. As always O'Neill adhered to the Broadway convention of a single figure in the spotlight—the star—the actor, standing alone upon the stage, buttressed by every theatrical device within reach and by a medley of profound and shallow emotions. In O'Neill there is no distinction between what is actual and false; his characters lie without knowing that they lie and in the same sense that Jeffer's people present superhuman bulk, so are O'Neill's characters dehumanized into huge tropical growths of single emotions. They are large; they inhabit jungles, skyscrapers and deserts.

Let us return, however, to O'Neill's special gift and see how accurately he has followed inarticulate waves of public emotion from *Beyond The Horizon* to his latest success, *Ah, Wilderness.* I think it would be a grave mistake to accuse him of pandering to public taste; he *is* public taste, that is, he represents the hope, the naive idealism, the despair, the loss of religious faith (and the finding of it again in *Days Without End*) of a middle class society. *Beyond The Horizon* (1920) was of that moment when America became conscious of a drift from farm to city, the twenty year process that followed the closing of the frontiers at the beginning of the century. Combined with this was the Liberal revolt against the outer conventions of Nineteenth Century progress and home environment. This was the premise that made a sympathetic understanding of *Beyond The Horizon* possible. In *The Emperor Jones* (1920) we see the same Liberal interest applied to the Negro, and to a primitive will to power. Brutus Jones, though on a West Indian Island, was a man corrupted by the same vices that attack a Morgan or a Rockefeller and these are dove-tailed into the weaknesses of an American artist. *Welded* (1924) showed clearly enough how the Freudian table and bedroom conversation of the moment, applied itself directly to problems of divorce. *Desire Under The Elms,* perhaps the best of his plays, penetrated into nineteenth century New England, a territory rediscovered by Van Wyck Brooks and Lewis Mumford (1924). The importance of the play lies in its accurate portrait of New England character, and its peculiar sense of property, which is the power that land-ownership holds over the individual—and here we see it in malignant decay. *The Great God Brown* (1926) and *Strange Interlude* (1928) were climaxes in post war psycho-analysis; and *Marco Millions* (1928) was a florid rewriting of Lewis's *Babbitt. Ah, Wilderness* (1933), a nostalgic comedy, was a direct reaction of the American middle class to the current mood of the depression; and the play expresses the desire to return to 1904 when the entire country felt itself to be on its way upward, the Spanish War over and won, and every small town from Maine to California boosting its real estate. *Days Without End* (1934) shows the swing of urban populations away from psychoanalysis into the Roman Catholic Church.

What O'Neill reveals is an overexposed x-ray negative of popular emotions during an important fifteen year period. I doubt if any conscious philosophy lies behind his work. He has been America's practising spiritualist too long. Night after night he has ordered "lights out" in the theatre and has sunk backward, eyes closed in semi-trance, gasping for air with the image of his lost soul reflected on a large screen before him. The voices echo from footlight to gallery and back again; the panoramic device moves onward reaching its climax in hysteria or the muffled sobbing of a dying man. The failure of his more ambitious plays is traceable to aesthetic flaws in his development. We need not enlarge here upon the false poetic values of *The Fountain* and *Mourning Becomes Electra,* but it is enough to note again that O'Neill's habit of clairvoyance has deeply rooted an inability to discriminate between what is actual insight and what is mere release of tawdry, shop-worn emotions. *Days Without End* seems to be the logical climax of a long abused talent. It is perhaps the worst play I have seen on the New York stage—and an audience of Tammany Hall Irish applauded reverently.

We would not be concerned with O'Neill and Jeffers if they were mere failures; it is their success and their potentialities that hold our attention. Waste seems to be the law that directs them to the end of their resources, a waste of creative output that is reflected in our social disorder. It is hard to believe that such a relationship is accidental, but it is too late now to give them gratuitous advice. The worship of amoral force for its own sake has been the common cause of self-destruction in America. Artists have known too well the impulse of the broker to throw himself out of eleventh story windows, have known too well that impulse to join him in a carnival of death. It is an end that both Jeffers and O'Neill regard with searching vision. Their final solution has neither resolved an aesthetic, nor has it given them the hope to extend the range of their experience. Already they belong to a past that is waiting to receive them.

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Voices from Germany

HANS SCHNITTER

THE funeral was yesterday. They found him in the *Landwehrkanal.* How he got there is not known to the authorities. They say he committed suicide. The proper way to commit suicide in the "Third Reich," prescribed by the authorities, is to wrap oneself in woolen blankets and to then tie them on the top as well as on the bottom. The blankets are furnished by the ordnance department, and the men for wrapping the bundles are assigned from some S.A. *(Sturm Abteilung)* staff.

This time it was Schmid.

Klauke has not been found as yet.

Bennals is under protective arrest. How he got there, he does not know, because he has not regained his consciousness. He has a few slight wounds around his head, just six. And his broken ribs ought not to be the reason for his still being unconscious either, says the doctor. And this fellow should know, he is not a Jew and has been practicing medicine for at least three months.

Frau Bremer is of no use for anything. She gets hysterical about a mere trifle.

Well, she has seen how they arrested young Plinz. They fetched him out of his bed, and blood was streaming over his face when they pulled him along the street, she says. Two of them held him by his legs and his head bumped against the cobblestones. And now she gets a nervous breakdown at the least provocation. It is obvious that she could not distribute handbills, that is, illegal handbills. Flock has disappeared; without any official assistance. He is in hiding. He has taken to his heels, although nobody really intended to do him harm. In the house they are saying that he is afraid, because an S.A. man has threatened to chop him to pieces.

Of the whole unit, nobody is left but Lehmann and Zilinski. They have to do all the work. The hardest job, however, is the distribution of the leaflets. And that is quite a lot for two men. When they get caught, they will be hanged; that's the new law, or—if clemency is recommended—just beheaded, with the axe. Lehmann and Zilinski are well aware of this, but still they distribute their leaflets. They put one in each public telephone booth. They put one in every mail box so that the people at the post office will get them. But they can't get at the masses. The beat is too dangerous.

Zilinski says: "You must mail them."

"Have you got the money?"

Lehmann's doorbell is ringing. Lehmann moves stealthily to the door and looks through the peephole. He comes back and says: "A beggar." Whereupon Zilinski remarks: "We must go begging for the money."

"That's another criminal offense."

"Yes. But it's only six months."

"All right. Let's go and try. I think we better take Papen Street. The people around there still have money."

Zilinski and Lehmann dress in their good suits. It will be all right, sure. Zilinski stays on the street while Lehmann goes into the houses. Lehmann starts at the top floor.

"Excuse me, lady, for bothering you. I am out of work and this morning I got the news that my poor old father has died. I would like to go there, but I haven't the fare . . ."

"Where do you want to go?"

"To Pillkallen. Not directly Pillkallen, just near Pillkallen, Peterwitz."

Twenty pfennigs.

Next door. "Excuse me, lady, . . . Pillkallen . . . near Pillkallen . . ."

"How do you want to get there? Via Rossitten?"

"Yes. Via Rossitten."

After Lehmann finished four hours' begging for the fare to Peterwitz near Pillkallen, he counts two marks thirty-eight pfennigs. It would take them ten days to get the postage for 300 letters. Then they sit in Lehmann's flat, brooding on how to go about it. It is high time. The longer the handbills lie around the hotter they get. Lehmann and Zilinski put the leaflets in envelopes. Zilinski takes eighteen and goes along with Lehmann. In one house the former puts one envelope in each letter-box. When the people open the letters, he's gone.

But only half an hour later the street is crowded with police. At home Lehmann fumbles around. He takes his calipers and measures a *groschen.* Diameter: 22 millimeters; thickness: 2 millimeters.

His wife asks him: "Do you want to *make* money?"

"No, no, I just want to see how big the thing is." Lehmann drops the calipers into his pocket and leaves. He goes through the streets and stops at a hardware store. Then he enters.

"What can I do for you?"

"Some little brass washers."

"What size?"

"Diameter: 22 millimeters; thickness: 2 millimeters."

"For a boat?" "Yes. How much?"

"GENTLEMEN! A CASE FOR STERILIZATION!" Georges Schreiber

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"One mark five for highly finished ones, ninety-five pfennigs for die-cut ones."

"300 die-cut ones," says Lehmann.

Zilinski and Lehmann go begging again, get another two marks and again buy little brass washers. Then they address their envelopes. After dark they go looking for an automatic stamp vendor. Zilinski watches, Lehmann puts one little brass disk after another in the slot. Kling, one stamp. Kling, another. Kling, Kling . . .

"Okay?" asks Zilinski. "Sure.'

"Say, boy, that's a good one. Now our revered government has to distribute our leaflets." "And without any risk to us."

The next day it is in the papers. The Communists even send their leaflets through the mails. Obviously Moscow has sent more roubles. Lehmann says to Zilinski: "Why don't you look in the business section? Maybe, the output in brass has increased two hundred thousand tons this month."

Translated by ANDOR BRAUN.

TENDERLY

Mammy . . . mammy . . .
The sun shines east, the sun shines west,
The sun shines . . . smash the soldiers.
Take the brains out.
Clean the skull.
Make a loving-cup
For sixty Camp-Fire girls
Drinking root-beer tenderly . . .
Tenderly, my solemn chick.
Tenderly, my evening bells.
Tenderly . . . no wine or beer,
And nail upon the toilet-wall
The fatal sign: "No Cameraderie.
Leave and enter quickly." . . . jars
Of Sinbad's perfume purify the air,
Recommended, advertised
In True Confessions, Snappy Wails,
Crumpled writing-paper known as hearts,
Stock-market figures functioning as brains,
Bill-boards on the mountain-side
Of this debacle . . . tenderly
My Broadway whores
Manicuring, currycombing
Pigs, newspaper-columnists
So very tenderly . . . the dog
Ran amuck and bit a priest
Walking to the Armory
To bless the soldiers, bless the bayonets,
Bless the Springfield rifles, bless the watch-fob,
Bless the Treaty of Versailles,
The coroner, the morgue, the banquet-speech.
Bless, bless, bless . . . they shot him on the streets—
The dog—the priest was cauterized
So tenderly . . . a young street-cleaner
Took the body in his can
And sang with rapture out of key:
"I can't give you anything
But love, Baby.
"I can't give" . . . the voice trailed out
So tenderly . . . so very, very tenderly.

MAXWELL BODENHEIM.

Correspondence

The Student Convention

TO THE NEW MASSES:

In your issue of January 16 there appeared an article entitled *The Students Learn,* dealing with the student conferences held in Washington during the Christmas vacation. It included a number of misstatements in regard to the tactics, policies and actions of the Student L.I.D. I hope you will print a correction of them.

Passing over the inference that the L.I.D. had to be solicited for its support of picketing at the Mayflower Hotel in protest against the exclusion of Negro delegates to the N.S.F.A. convention from the latter's "grand ball" (actually the news as to this matter came to the L.I.D. entirely independently of the N.S.L., in fact, through our own members, and the picketing was planned as a joint enterprise of the N.S.L. and the L.I.D.) there seems to be two main points of criticism: the line of action pursued at the Conference on Students in Politics, and the refusal of the offer of amalgamation with the N.S.L.

As to the first of these, it is charged that the L.I.D. was guilty of breach of faith, of contract, of agreement, of covenant, and what not, in differing with the N.S.L. on the tactics to be employed in the Conference. It is altogether a mistake to say that we refused to co-operate with the N.S.L. in attempting to secure the adoption of a resolution condemning the N.R.A. It was mutually agreed, though the resolution was part of our joint program, that this would not be done. No member, either of the N.S.L. or of the L.I.D., urged such a resolution on the floor of the Conference or in the Executive Committee. It was tacitly dropped by both groups. To bring the matter up now, in view of the silence of the N.S.L. at the time, is altogether unwarranted.

But the most important controversy was as to inclusion of a resolution urging that the organizations represented in the Conference affiliate with the American League Against War and Fascism—not, as stated in the article, a resolution to endorse the League. It was an unfortunate fact, not mentioned in the article, that the Conference was not permitted to adopt resolutions by virtue of an agreement with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, in whose building the meetings were held. This meant that the conservative elements present were able to bar radical action on the floor, and forced the question of the program into the Executive Committee. The L.I.D. was as much opposed as any group present to this result, but felt that the procedure was better than the adoption of no program whatsoever. Accordingly, its members supported this way of escaping from the dilemma. (It may be noted that two members of the N.S.L., including its member on the Executive Committee, likewise voted for the proposal, and only changed their minds on a second ballot after a hurried consultation with other members.)

In the Executive Committee, the L.I.D. members were instructed by their National Executive Committee to work for the adoption of the resolution up to, and only to, the point of incurring a split in the Conference. When it appeared that some groups, including notably the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A., were prepared to walk out and to refuse to participate in the Continuation Committee, if the resolution were insisted upon, the L.I.D. delegates exercised their discretion and voted against inclusion of the resolution. This was not to "ingratiate" ourselves with anyone. It was to keep the Continuation Committee in existence, on the theory that to split the Conference would completely isolate the L.I.D. and the N.S.L. from all possibility of contact with students on most campuses. The Conference had been called to establish a broader basis of program and organization. To have followed any other line than that adopted would, we believe, have been to render that purpose unattainable. Moreover, a program was adopted, a program upon which most students present could unite. If it was "thoroughly emasculated" by omission of the resolutions on the N.R.A. and the American League, partial responsibility for the former must rest on the N.S.L., which agreed to drop it, while insistence on the latter would have destroyed the whole purpose of the Conference.

As to the question of amalgamation, there is a plain misstatement of fact. The vote was not, as reported in the article, fourteen for, and twenty-eight against. In the first place, the vote was on an entirely different resolution—a motion that until the time seemed more opportune for unification, in view of existing differences, the L.I.D. would continue to co-operate with the N.S.L. on specific issues. This was passed by an overwhelming majority, only seven or eight of the more than sixty delegates present at this session expressing opposition to it. A committee of five was elected to meet with the N.S.L. Since that time a joint program has been arranged.

Attempts to discredit the L.I.D. for its allegedly small attendance, and to minimize the vote on the ground that it is not representative of L.I.D. sentiment are wholly without foundation. Eighty-five delegates from thirty-five colleges and universities attended the convention. The conference had been called to discuss matters of organization, and the delegates came, many with instructions as to courses of action to be followed. To say that the procedure was not democratic is, therefore, almost ludicrous. Had an organized minority rushed through a plan for unification no such cry would have been raised. There was full and free discussion—the N.S.L. presented its reasons, adherents of amalgamation said their say, and so did opponents. The vote was taken and stands. The Student L.I.D. will adhere to it, believing the result to be correct.

Sincerely,
KENNETH MEIKLEJOHN,
Member, N.E.C. Student L.I.D.

A Reply

TO THE NEW MASSES:

In his letter to the NEW MASSES, Mr. Meiklejohn calls into question several points regarding relations of the N.S.L. and L.I.D. at the Washington conferences, which are entirely matters of fact and, therefore, scarcely open to dispute.

1. At no time did the N.S.L. agree mutually with the L.I.D. to abandon the plank condemning the N.R.A. Such a resolution was adopted by a number of the study groups and was urged by N.S.L. members both on the floor and in the Executive Committee.

2. Although it seems somewhat pedantic to quibble over this point, the resolution agreed to jointly by the L.I.D. and N.S.L. was for affiliation of the continuations committee or of whatever organization should emerge from the conference, to the American League Against War and Fascism. The agreement with the Chamber of Commerce prohibiting the adoption of resolutions was not known to the N.S.L., which would never have been a party to such an agreement. It had been made before the N.S.L. was invited to participate. Strange to say, no mention of this agreement was made by the L.I.D., at the time when the two organizations drew up their plans for co-operation, although it certainly was relevant. Indeed, the L.I.D. was largely responsible for the entire undemocratic procedure which the conference was forced to follow. The N.S.L. was particularly opposed to referring the matter of program to a committee set up prior to the conference, which in no way reflected the sentiment of the conference.

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3. The L.I.D. instructed its delegates to the Executive Committee, according to Meiklejohn, "to work for the adoption of the controversial resolution up to, and only to, the point of incurring a split in the conference." Well and good, but due to the efforts of the same L.I.D. leaders this resolution was never tested on the floor. It was allowed to die without a fight in the bosom of a self-appointed committee. Indeed, many of the study sessions, the delegates had almost their only chance to express themselves, adopted the resolution on the American League.

4. On the matter of the amalgamation vote Meiklejohn is right. A direct vote on the matter was never allowed to come up on the floor. The motion adopted, was proposed by Monroe Sweetland as a stop-gap to block a more direct motion. It deliberately evaded the issue. The resort to such unprincipalled parliamentary railroading, by those who affirm their faith in revolution through democratic methods, is an illuminating paradox.

5. To deny that the representation at the L.I.D. convention was narrow, is to run counter to the admission made by many of the L.I.D. delegates. A day before the convention opened Sweetland, in reply to a question, answered that an attendance of around two hundred was expected.

EDMUND STEVENS.

Alabama's Underlying Forces

TO THE NEW MASSES:

In the January 30 issue of NEW MASSES appears an editorial on the Scottsboro case, in which, after stating correctly that Judge Horton yielded to tremendous mass pressure and reversed his decision in the case last year, you say:

> In so far as Horton yielded—though very reluctantly—he was not the perfect expression of Southern ruling class tenacity. For his defection he is likely to find himself on the scrap heap of Alabama. The "honor of a white woman," be she liar, prostitute, or what not, must be upheld. The supremacy of the white ruling class must not be challenged, etc.

May I point out that the formulation of the first two of these sentences indicates a mistaken notion of the forces at work in the Scottsboro case.

Horton fulfilled his function perfectly in the Scottsboro cases—even in his reversal. He is not on the political scrap-heap. On the contrary, his main opponent in the coming elections has withdrawn his candidacy, because he does not want to oppose Horton on the basis of the latter's Scottsboro decision. It is approved by some of the white rulers. And why is this?

The answer is to be found in the struggle between the more advanced industrialists of Alabama with the feudal agrarian interests; in this and in the allotment of roles to be played in the common fight of these two sections of the ruling class to crush both white and Negro workers, for the maintenance of the present social system. One of the major prerequisites to this objective is the maintenance of "white supremacy." Even more basic is the struggle to stop the growth of unity between black and white toilers.

Permit me to point to a most illuminating phenomenon in reference to the struggle between the industrialists and the agrarians in Alabama.

When the Tuscaloosa lynchings occurred, with the accompanying wave of protest, the newspapers of Alabama were sharply divided on certain points, united on others. The newspapers of Birmingham, dominated by, and the organs of, the Tennessee Coal and Iron Corporation (a Morgan trust), raised hands in horror, demanded (vaguely) punishment for the lynchers, and in general excoriated the agrarians for this spectacular action. They joined them, however, in laying the blame for the lynchings on the International Labor Defense, because it sought to defend these Negroes framed on rape charges, against the legal lynchings that were planned!

The response of the small-town agrarian organs

Reginald Marsh

"I JUST HEARD SOMEONE SAY 'REVOLUTION!'"

was immediate and revealing. These papers, including the Montgomery "Advertiser," published editorials on this question which, in their lynch-incitement made even the infamous Black Hundred organs of Czarist Russia seem mild by comparison. They immediately praised the lynchers as honest, patriotic, infuriated and provoked citizens, and laid the blame on the International Labor Defense for having dared try to defend the lynch-victims. To the chiding of the lynchers by the industrialist papers, the response of the agrarians was quite openly: "What do you want us to do, take Negroes into the police stations and murder them on the sly, like you do in Birmingham?"

The clash, obviously, is only one of two theories on methods. The aim—to keep a vast reservoir of cheap, terrorized labor reserve by putting the white toilers against the Negroes—is the same.

These are the two factions within the white ruling class camp, represented respectively by Horton and Callahan. In his reversal Horton was in no sense untypical of his class. He was acting according to the "advanced" formula of the industrialist, who feels mass pressure more directly. It must be remembered he could have reversed without ordering a new trial, which would have been tantamount to dismissing the indictments. A small concession, and a greater demagogy, the better to deliver the blow, is the "advanced" lynch method. In the struggle between the rival ruling-class factions of Alabama, following Horton's reversal, the ruthless agrarians won. Horton, with his smooth and polite ways of lynching was removed from the case, and Callahan, the open lyncher, put in charge.

LOUIS COLMAN,
International Labor Defense.

I Was a Spy

TO THE NEW MASSES:

In reviewing *I Was A Spy,* Comrade Adler says: "The point of view implied in the film is that war is deplorable but that there is courage, heroism, and human beauty that motivate people. . . . Despite the sincerity and freshness of the film it remains an effective means of diluting the resentment against war. . . . Within its limitations however, *I Was A Spy* is a sincere, integrated and moving work. . . . It tells only half truth, and tells it competently even though it always just falls short of the penetration and power of the Soviet *Patriots* or the German *Comrades of 1918.*"

The implication of the review as represented by the quotation is that the film in question is a pacifist (therefore an anti-war) film. However, it is nothing of the sort. This movie is definitely and conclusively a *pro* war film. There is not the slightest indication that war is (even) deplorable, horrible, or terrible. It is not even in the class of the so called 'pacifist" or the horrors-of-war films: *All Quiet On the Western Front, The Case of Sergeant Grischa, The Big Parade,* etc.

As a matter of fact the argument presented is that the "terrible profession of spy" is honorable and that the whole war is justified by such acts of heroism and patriotism. *I Was A Spy,* though it is in a sense better film making than most spy films is no different from them. The central message that a good woman will sell her virtue for some military information is present in this film as much (not as glamorously perhaps) as in *Dishonored, Mata Hari, Madam Spy,* etc., etc. And it is because this new film is not as glamorous and therefore much more convincing — much more believable than other spy films that it is so much more dangerous and malicious. I can't see where the sincerity of the director or of the actors makes any difference in the final judgment of this film.

Although produced in England, it cannot be considered as an "independent film" detached from commercial interests. It happens that Victor Saville, the director, is employed by Gaumont-British (the producers) one of the largest commercial companies in Great Britain. The British film industry is as fully controlled by finance capital as is any other major company in the United States. It is no accident that the Rockefeller-Chase National Bank controlled Fox Film Corp. picked this film for their own distribution in the United States.

IRVING LERNER.

A Note from Strachey

TO THE NEW MASSES:

What the hell is the matter with Scott Nearing? He is in great excitement because he has discovered I wrote two book reviews, one of Hindus's book, *The Great Offensive,* and the other of Churchill's *Marlborough,* for the Herald-Tribune's book supplement. He may have noticed that I have written for all sorts of other papers of all sorts of political opinions in the United States. I did this after taking the advice of several comrades in America who all took the view that I should write wherever I could get stuff from our point of view accepted.

This policy may have been right or wrong, but really to make an attack on the editors of THE NEW MASSES because of this, seems to me to be fantastic nonsense.

JOHN STRACHEY.

The CONTRIBUTORS

NATHANIEL HONIG is editor of Labor Unity, organ of the T.U.U.L.

JOHN STRACHEY, author of *The Coming Struggle for Power* and *The Menace of Fascism,* is correspondent of the NEW MASSES in England.

EDWIN ROLFE is on the Daily Worker.

JOHN DOS PASSOS is gathering material in Washington for the last chapter of his forthcoming book, *In All Lands.*

JOSEPHINE GARWOOD and K. G. D. LITTLE have recently returned from Porto Rico. They are frequent contributors to magazines.

A. B. MAGIL is Detroit correspondent of the NEW MASSES.

HORACE GREGORY, critic and poet, is the author of a study of D. H. Lawrence, *Pilgrim of the Apocalypse.*

EISHI TANAKA is a member of the Proletarian Writers' League of Japan.

MARGARET WRIGHT MATHER has recently returned from a big game-hunting trip and is relaxing this way.

HUGO GELLERT has just published *Karl Marx Capital in Lithographs.*

ELLA WINTER, correspondent of the NEW MASSES in California, is the author of *Red Virtue.*

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER is at work on a novel, and a new book of verse.

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Three-Day Soldiers

A Short Story by Eishi Tanaka

(*In view of the war plans of Japanese imperialism this story, sent to the* NEW MASSES *by the Proletarian Writers' League of Japan, is of special interest particularly in the light of the maturing revolutionary situation there.*—THE EDITORS.)

THE SKY was frozen gray. The mountains enclosing the village were white-capped with snow. It was certain that very soon cold and starvation would creep in and gradually reduce the inhabitants to lifelessness. The peasants could not afford to wait for the worst to come.

It was one of the early days of December. Despite the fact that the fields were almost cleared, the peasants were very restless. They felt busier than they actually were. Deep in their hearts they felt darkness and sorrow. And it was not merely because the leaves were falling, or the mountains being snow covered, or the reddish dirt of the fields spread bare of vegetation.

On this particular day, preliminary practice for the temporary duty of the three-day soldiers was held in the playground of the village school. There were thirty-one men.

"At-t-e-e-e-n-tion!" a leader from the local branch of the ex-servicemen's organization shouted, pushing out his chest, boldly facing the north wind.

Nobody, however, paid any attention to him. The faces of the recruits were a pale dark, and goose-pimpled; their limbs and fingers stiff with cold.

"Hey, you!" shouted the leader, "buck up!"

"But we waited over an hour!" grudgingly returned Takahashi.

"That's right," another voice added. "We're busy, you know.'

"Waiting in the cold over an hour, damn it! I'm frozen from the guts up."

For a moment the leader appeared to want to speak. He shrugged his shoulders, looked at his wrist watch, then straightened up. "Well, it's after two. I want to finish up early today. Say, boys, think of me, won't you?" he pleaded.

Three-day soldiers, unwilling as they were, formed a single line. They all looked funny, with the unaccustomed military uniforms or training costumes. Most of them had spent hours looking for them in the village. Some of the caps were too small, some of the coats too big or too long, some of the pants ridiculously short.

First, there was roll call. One by one they answered. Then, coming to the last three, Takahashi, Nakamura and Okakura were severely scolded. They weren't in uniform. They had been working in the fields until an hour ago. They had stopped work and bicycled here. They had not had time to change into uniform.

"Listen, you!" the leader said. "If anybody doesn't take the preliminary practice of today seriously, well, he will have a lot of trouble after he gets to the barracks. Understand? You are supposed to have gone through youth training camps, and so the army thinks you know your stuff already. We don't make any allowances in the barracks. If you make mistakes there and are slapped hard in the face for that, you can't have any complaint to make . . . Now, answer me! Who went through youth training camp? Raise your hands! . . . What, only three? Damn it! Well . . . Who went to middle school? . . . Two?

"Now, I understand that most of you have little education. Let's get to work. Tomorrow there will be men from the entire county. Don't make yourselves a laughing stock."

The leader, a sergeant on the reserve list, was speaking almost to himself. All the rest were just standing there thinking, with drooped heads. "Why have we to come out like this in the cold, and be scolded," each one wondered.

But, there was some fun, after all, in running all over the playground, like kids again. Why, how long ago was it that they last ran around like this? Although they left the grade school only five or six years ago, their school days were things of a far, far past. At this moment, Takahashi felt very lonely, thinking that he had to work like a horse, having no time to enjoy his youth. Why, it may be that youth will just leave him behind, unless he purposefully goes after it! But, on second thought, he said to himself—"Well, it doesn't matter, if I go after it or not."

The school ground was wide. The *gingko* and the maple trees were all stripped of leaves. Under the great oak tree in the west corner stood the new chapel building, with red colored roof. It was not long ago that some of the younger elements in the village held a meeting, condemning the corrupt village council for trying to spend the money for that new chapel building. But the chapel was built with the money squeezed out of the sweating peasants. The village was becoming leaner and leaner every time such new public buildings were erected. Takahashi's side of the village, north of the river, stood like toy houses made of match boxes.

In the afternoon the wind was strong and cold. The soldiers marched and ran, but they could not get warm. The howling wind carried sand and grit.

"Now we are going to handle rifles," said the leader. "Bring over those rifles from under that window. And don't forget the cartridges . . ."

II

"Hey! Did you ever handle a rifle before?"

"Nope. But I've often seen them many times before. How about you?"

"Oh, I've handled rifles many, many times before," the first answered with a rather confident manner.

"Well, that's that. But who's going to pay the train-fare tomorrow?" he murmured. The other didn't answer.

"Hey, Taka [hashi]," Nakamura patted him on the shoulder. "The branch organization must pay the fare. Don't you think?"

"That's right. I was just thinking about that."

"Now, nobody has said so openly; but I know that none of us has enough money," Nakamura told Taka, as if he had made a real discovery.

"You're right," answered Takahashi.

"Sure, if they won't pay, I'm not going to the barracks . . ."

"No good, buddy," said Nakamura. "You shouldn't do that. The local branch must pay. Think of it! You mean to say that they can leave us to starve?"

Nakamura had been attending night school in the city, but after his father died he was called back to work in the fields ever since. He continued his study, though, even after coming back to the village. Takahashi put genuine trust in Nakamura. It was he who had organized in the village an association to give Japanese the Latin alphabet, and had started studying English with a few village youths. He did not talk much. But once he spoke up, he did not back down so easily.

"Well, if they pay . . . nothing could be better . . . but . . . " Takahashi was timid. "It's a shame to ask them to pay. . . . "

"What? A shame? No. It's all too natural . . ."

In the center of the playground the sergeant was waving his cap impatiently. "Hey, you! What are you doing there? You tubercular good-for-nothing! Move fast!"

All started to run, dragging their heavy army shoes or their rubber-soled *tabi* [a kind of Japanese footwear]. "Can't carry the rifle. I'm too hungry!" somebody shouted. Everybody laughed. But the sergeant was motionless and looked at the boys with hostility.

"Double file!" he howled. "Understand! The rifle is the soul of a soldier. You must

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handle it carefully. Now we shall start."

The three-day soldiers didn't say a word, but silently obeyed his orders. From shoulder-arms, to firing from knee position, filing off while in march, etc., it took nearly two hours.

"They ought to stop by this time . . ." Voices of complaint sprang up on all sides. The sky was darkening and twilight sweeping the wide playground. All were chilled to the bone.

"Looks like rain tomorrow," murmured Okakura, glancing into the face of the next man to him.

"Even if it rains cats and dogs tomorrow, I'd like it better than this," the other fellow replied as if he were angry. Everyone was cursing the unfair three-day soldier system. They had started to do things like this about three years back. Since the start of the Manchurian war, this village had contributed a considerable number of lives already. Hence, those who were assigned to the first reserve were considered rather unlucky.

The sergeant put his hand in his pocket and drew out a small folded piece of paper. Again he twirled his moustache. "Finally," he said, "I must give you some advice. Tomorrow morning you must be at the barracks at ten. So we are taking the eight-twenty train. Understand? The train leaves at eight-twenty. It's necessary that you be at the station before that. Make it eight. Next, as to things you must bring . . . Of course, you shouldn't bring anything that you don't absolutely need. Generally speaking, towels, tooth powder, paper handkerchiefs, pencils, note book, soap—this you don't need to take if you don't feel like it, as you stay in barracks for only three days. As to tobacco, you better take two or three packages. You can't buy them in the barracks."

As the sergeant's voice paused, all began talking at once. "Christ! You mean to say we have to take tobacco, too?"

"Well, if that's the case, I'll carry my tobacco casket . . ."

At that, a laugh went up somewhere from the rear.

"Now, about train fare. It will cost you 52 *sen* each way . . ."

"Local branch should pay it!" somebody shouted abruptly. All faces turned to the speaker. But as soon as they saw it was Okakura, they stopped laughing and became very serious.

"The . . . next to the train fare . . ." the sergeant continued as if he had not heard anything—"I must explain to you about the expenses for three days. You must pay to the Army eighty *sen* in all. Sixty-five *sen* of this is for five meals during the three days; ten *sen* goes to pay for the use of bedding; and five *sen* for the stoves. Now, besides, if you want to eat something extra, there are stores there . . ."

By this time, nobody could keep silent. They started howling aloud all around. The cold, the darkness, and the weather tomorrow, were forgotten. Burning with anger, Takahashi was staring at the sergeant's moustache. "Well, just who is this sergeant? Can't he understand what we are thinking of now?" he thought. "Damn it! The train fare, the meals, payment even for use of the bedding! What a goddam . . ." Angrily, he spat on the ground. "Listen . . . that's too much . . ." He was almost weeping.

At this moment, Nakamura was talking quietly with several others. It seemed their eyes were burning in the dark, their minds tied together by an invisible thread—a mighty, powerful thread!

"Then, you mean," Nakamura started to say, "that we pay for everything? All right. If we were rich we might pay two *yen,* and even five. But you should know how we live. You can't tell us such a thing at this end of the year."

"You have no sense of loyalty," the sergeant said, without looking at anyone, "of loyalty towards the government. If you have the will and determination to support the nation, and if you have the true *Yamato* [Japanese] spirit, you can endure anything . . ."

"Yamato spirit? Hell! I ain't got any . . ." voices sprang up. A mighty threat!

Now, even those who had gone through the youth training camp or the middle school

William Sanderson

were silent. As far as they were concerned, one or two *yen* was a small matter.

"I heard that the treasurer of the local branch had spent on himself over three hundred *yen,*" a new voice added with rising anger.

"That's right; he did." Takahashi had suddenly mustered courage.

Already in the watch-room of the school house there were two glimmering lamps; outer darkness had completely swallowed up the playground as well as the mulberry groves surrounding it. The deadly sky which spread high and far over the mountain, seemed quietly to tremble in the cold, silent atmosphere.

"I guess you don't even care if its night before we finish," the sergeant burst out, greatly irritated. "As to the train fare, I'll take it up with the local branch. But the local branch, also . . ." Apparently, he wanted to say that they had no money in the treasury. But he dared not. "Tomorrow," he said instead, "you must come to the station without fail. You must all bring leggings as well. Any more questions? No? All right, we've finished. Dismissed!"

He was wiping sweat from his forehead as he turned away. There was a sarcastic laugh —and he felt as if everybody was laughing at him from behind.

III

The morning was unusually serene, but the temperature very low. The road from the village to the station was frozen hard. Frost lay heavy on the fields, and meeting the first rays of the sun, the fields appeared to be spread with bright silver.

The railway station was surrounded by twenty or thirty stores of all kinds. This morning every one of them was crowded with soldiers. Most of them had their *Nigirimeshi* [rice balls for lunch] wrapped up and hanging to their waists. They had bundles in their hands. We could see some with old, threadbare overcoats, and others with mantles mostly in tatters. It was a queer spectacle.

"I bet you we look like a company of disabled soldiers."

"Don't be so ashamed of yourself!"

The leaders were coming in on the country bus. The reserve sergeant who was at the training, came wearing a mantle, with a briefcase in his left hand. Snappily, he approached one of the groups where Taka was.

"Well! Five after eight. Let's start roll-call." He was apparently well satisfied. "Now," he said, "as to tickets, *WE* will buy 'em."

Everybody heard it, but nobody showed any sign of gratitude. They all seemed to have an expectation of something serious and embarrassing, which they themselves did not know yet.

Taka tried to figure out what it was. Then suddenly he understood. Their pockets were empty! He looked for Naka. Naka was seated behind the big stove and was smoking a very cheap cigarette.

"Say, did you bring it?"

"What the hell are you worrying about, like an old woman?" Naka returned, frowning a bit. "Here, have a smoke!"

"Thanks—but I'm worried."

"What? Worried? I'll tell you. We're going to work for the nation. Well, if we're broke, it's up to the government to look after us. Get me? I shook down my wife and got a half-yen in silver. Now that I've bought a package of cigarettes I have forty-three *sen* left. If I need any more money, somebody will have to lend me some . . ."

After arriving at K——— city, they were made to wait over an hour in front of the barracks. By this time, they had found out that there were nearly 500 reservists called up to three-day service from U——— county, alone.

"They finished three-day service, and going back, aren't they?"

"Right. At any rate, they are calling in twice as many."

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"To use us to eat bullets, eh? . . ."

Sitting in the sun, they were passing away time in idle talk. At ten sharp, they marched through the barrack gate three abreast. Once inside that gate, they ceased to be themselves. Within it reigned the serene tradition of "absolute obedience."

"You are the lowest here. So just keep bowing all the time. Then you won't have any trouble," the sergeant advised them.

Finally, a young adjutant came out, holding the hilt of his sabre in his left hand. His polished boots trod heavily on the frozen ground. Glancing casually at his men, he looked for a proper position.

"You should know," he began, "that our regiment is now fighting bravely on the fields of Manchuria. At the present moment bitter weather is coming, but our boys over there are becoming braver in spite of the cold. I want you to know that our regiment has a real fighting tradition. Therefore, I expect you, during these three days, to behave bravely, and not to blemish the regiment's glorious tradition. In other words, I expect you to be thoroughly acquainted with actual warfare, and to be ready to take up arms as soon as you are called to the colors."

The adjutant then began an explanation of the present international situation. His sharp voice resounded in the vast courtyard of the barracks. But his task was not easy. Every time he was stuck, he put up his right hand and ran his finger around under his collar, as if to tell the onlookers that it was really his throat which was bothering him. But he finally managed to say that neither Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy nor China is formidable. The question today is the United States and Russia. The Russian Army especially made tremendous progress during the last few years.

"Red Russia today is facing our neighboring government, Manchukuo, across the great Kinhan range. That country is a dreadful source of Communism. When we fight against Russia, we must fight against this deadly doctrine, too. Fortunately, you are loyal subjects of the Mikado. You have the fine Yamato spirit to fight within the country against all dangerous thoughts, and to put up an heroic struggle abroad against the outside enemy. I expect you to refrain from reckless talk and action, and to be truly worthy subjects of the Mikado."

During the whole hour of the adjutant's lecture Naka listened attentively. He found out, and correctly, what the Army most dreads and against whom it was training the youth to fight. He shouted—within his mind—"No! Russia is not our enemy! Maybe it is the enemy of the rich, but not of ourselves!"

IV

Through a pale, cold window glass, moonlight like drops of mercury poured into the barracks. Outside, the cold wind howled furiously, as if in a dance of death. The frostbitten grasses in the rear yards were slumbering amid the whistling winds, and icicles hung on the shrubs.

When the eighty-thirty roll call ended, "Lights out" was sounded from above the dyke. The whole barracks then was supposed to go quietly to sleep. Despite the exhaustion of the day, however, it was then that these soldiers found a tiny bit of secret freedom.

A "high private" from the light machine-gun company who had been sent to look after the second corps of the Ninth Company, to which Taka was assigned, gave him a detailed story of what barrack life is like.

"It seems hard to stay here so long," one fellow said. "Even when you have to go to the toilet, you got to carry your shoes and cap, lest they be stolen, and to tell the superior just where you are going."

"I know," the high private smiled. "Well, be a real simpleton, and then you can endure what goes on here. Otherwise, you can't stay even for a day. Remember, the Army is the place where they train human bullets." His eyes dropped. Also, the eyes of his listeners dropped.

During the night, the high private was awakened twice. Naka and Taka watched him from their beds.

"He'll never have any sleep."

"You're right, I hate to be a soldier."

Because of the strange environment and the cold, no one slept well.

"Look what a beautiful moon! I can see the peak of H——— Mountain."

"O, such beautiful moonlight . . . and Kawachiyama . . ."

"Hey, don't get sentimental . . ."

A jumble of voices and hummings mixed through the thin dormitory partitions.

"Taka!" said Naka, who had been staring at the ceiling. "Did you hear what the captain said this afternoon? He said that reservists like us were sent to the Shanghai front, and the very first night they were attacked by the enemy and annihilated. He said that it was because they didn't know enough about using arms properly . . . It sounded as if he was *blaming* them."

"Of course that's what he meant. But if the Army ships untrained soldiers to the front like that, it's as if they're sent to be killed . . ."

"So, now they give us three days' training and try to tell us that we can never say that we don't know how to use arms, eh?"

"Sons-of-bitches! What inhuman beings they are . . ."

The moon was already high. And the shadows thrown by the adjoining roof darkened the room. Now a few snores were heard. The barrack looked almost like a stable. Rifles rested grotesquely on the racks.

For some time the footsteps of the sentinel drummed in their ears. Then they all went to sleep. The watchman came again to look things over then went away. Naka was dreaming . . . but suddenly he thought he heard a deep bass voice right in his ear.

"Is this the Second Corps?"

"It is . . . But what do you want?"

"Well, somebody sent word from the 10th Company. They say both the 10th and the 11th Companies refused to submit to the forced collection of expense. . . . They asked you to cooperate with them. So . . . you understand? Your corps shouldn't pay, either. . . . "

"I ain't got any money, even if I wanted . . ." Naka tried to ascertain just who the owner of the voice was.

"From what village?" Taka asked abruptly.

"I'll tell you later . . ." But the owner of the voice, who was wrapped up in a great black overcoat, was already gone . . .

"Say, were you awake?"

"I couldn't sleep . . ." Taka answered, staring towards the long, gloomy hall.

"Looks like everybody is against the forced collection . . ."

"Few of them have any cash."

"Certainly there isn't an idle *yen* in the village . . ."

"But who was he? Pretty brave, wasn't he? . . ."

"He must have taken advantage of his night watch duty. Must be a union member from O——— village."

"Unionist? Peasants' Union? Why . . ."

V

Six o'clock. The turn-out. Rolling up the blankets. Cleaning. Some must go to the yard with brooms. Some to the kitchen to bring breakfast. Still others must go after scrubbing water, etc., etc. Then face-washing and breakfast—the usual procedure.

This morning, however, as soon as everyone turned out, leaders and high privates in charge of each corps were called out. Then, after they were gone, the men found handbills hidden in their shoes.

"Look! I got one."

"Yes? I did, too!"

They started to read them. The handbills said that it was too much to try to collect eighty *sen* from each peasant, who doesn't have even small change for cigarettes; that there was no necessity that the peasants should pay. Instead, it urged them to demand pay for the three days' service. Against the three-day soldier system! Against the robber war! So it read. The whole corps was now boiling. There being no one to enforce the "serene tradition," the place was like a buzzing hive.

Oka was running from the 3rd Corps. He was smiling. His heaving chest and shoulders seemed to sing a song of triumph.

"Say, Naka!" he broke out, hurriedly, "aren't you surprised? Aren't you glad?"

"Let's do the same," said Nakamura briefly.

"Right! We got to. More, I found a union man last night. You know. I told him we of our village wanted to form a union. He said he'll come down one of these days. I told him everything, and he said he understood our problems."

"That's great!" They shook hands on it.

Away in the officers' quarters, footsteps were pacing up and down, up and down. And in between a fearful cry and the shouting of orders, counter orders were heard.

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Books

Liberalism and Tragedy

A MODERN TRAGEDY, by Phyllis Bentley. The Macmillan Company, $2.50.

THE scene of Miss Bentley's new novel—Yorkshire, the textile district of England—is the scene of her earlier novels, *Carr* and *Inheritance;* but *A Modern Tragedy,* unlike its predecessors, is set in the present, in the era of the depression. All the characters are, directly or indirectly, involved in the textile business. The central character, Walter Haigh, happens to be chosen as the tool of Leonard Tasker, a shrewd and unscrupulous manufacturer. Tasker's exploits involve not only Walter and his family, but also other business men of the district, including the honest and aristocratic Henry Clay Crosland, the town's oldest and most respected manufacturer. On the other hand, depression creates a shortage of work, and thousands of craftsmen are thrown out of their jobs. So far as the book is concerned, the unemployed are represented by Harry and Milner Schofield, who are victims of their own stubbornness rather than of the depression. The former, after a long period of unemployment, takes a non-union job with Walter; the latter eventually joins an unemployed council. The climax of the book comes with the collapse of Tasker's schemes, resulting in suicide for Crosland and jail sentences for Tasker and Haigh.

Miss Bentley is one of the ablest of the younger English writers. *Inheritance,* based not only on a thorough knowledge of the growth of the textile industry, but also on a strong and affectionate sense of the industry's importance and the toil that created it, showed how rich and dramatic a story of business and business relationships could be. The reader was, however, distressed by the weakness of the conclusion: after balancing capital and labor against each other in a record of a century of struggle, Miss Bentley suddenly preached a sermon on love and brotherhood, and, though she was dealing with a period of obvious intensification of the class struggle, asked the reader to believe that all problems could be solved by the exercise of a little good will. Such a conclusion, distressing enough as anti-climax, was even more distressing in its indication of Miss Bentley's shortcomings. Her longing for class collaboration, which in practice meant a strenuous effort at impartiality in the record of earlier conflicts between employers and employed, could be effective within limits in dealing with the past, but it was easy to see the dangers Miss Bentley would run in treating the present. Moreover, the publication in America of her earlier work, *Carr,* increased this alarm. A solid novel, carefully wrought in the Victorian manner, Carr enhanced one's respect for the author, but at the same time it showed how much better she understood employers than she did workers. Her liberalism led her to prefer a generous and honorable employer to a callous and unscrupulous one; it made her sorry for workers who were badly treated; but it was, after all, the liberalism of a textile manufacturer's daughter, and she could not go against her class. The most she could do was to assert that classes ought not to exist.

Miss Bentley has, of course, carried her liberalism into *A Modern Tragedy,* and the novel confirms all our fears. For her spokesman in the book, she has chosen Rosamund Haigh, Walter's sister, an intelligent, liberal-minded, and sensitive young woman. Rosamund, on the last day of the trial, sees the unemployed, led by Milner Schofield, starting on their hunger march to London. "There was some connection between the hunger-marchers and the trial, she felt. . . . Outside, hungry and desperate men paraded; within, the men who had most experience in organizing their industry were being tried for a crime of personal greed." Rosamund wonders if employers have ever stopped to consider the effect of their actions on their employees. "Henry Clas Crosland had thought of his work-people, Rosamund felt sure." (Crosland, like Carr, is the benevolent employer, probably modeled on some ancestor of Miss Bentley; it is his type she really admires.) But if Crosland had been thoughtful, certainly such men as Tasker and her brother had not been. She goes on: "Had the leader of the hunger marchers considered anyone but his own class? Rosamund thought not . . . And she began to think that it was this universal limitation of vision which had caused the frightful, the altogether terrible, the tragic waste represented by that column of marchers outside and the men on trial within." And lest anyone should fail to understand the moral, Miss Bentley has an epilogue spoken by Rosamund: "I can see that not till men have learned the mutual love which cast out fear can the economic problem be solved."

If we believe that Miss Bentley is sadly mistaken in her conception of the solution of the industrial problem, we can see how she comes to hold such an opinion, and we can grant that such sincere humanitarianism as hers has elements of nobility. The question we have to ask, however, is whether this position has enabled her to write a moving and satisfying novel. There are two reasons for saying it has not. In the first place, Miss Bentley, by stating her problem in ethical terms, has suggested that there were alternatives that her characters might have acted differently. But this is simply not true; though Miss Bentley does not say and probably would not admit it, her book clearly shows that there were no fine, honorable, socially useful ways in which Tasker and Walter could have expended their talents. Henry Clay Croslands are the product of a period of expanding capitalism when the evils of the system are largely hidden from sight in far-away India; they cannot exist in an era of world-wide depression. Tasker and Haigh had to be what they were or starve. The tragedy is the tragedy of a system, not of the evil in men's hearts.

In the second place, the tragedy of Haigh and Tasker and Crosland is a minor tragedy when compared with the sufferings of the myriads of workers brought by unemployment to starvation or to mental and physical decay on the dole. Miss Bentley refers to these unemployed just often enough to make her concern with the unhappiness of the industrialists seem as irrelevant as it really it. But this tragedy, the real tragedy of the crisis, does not appear in her book. Why not? Does she really know, though afraid to confess it to herself, that, in the face of these millions of jobless, her talk of brotherly love is nonsense? Is that why the principal representative in her book of the working class is a half-educated blatherskite who is out of work because of his own pigheadedness? If, instead of portraying Milner Schofield, who lost his job in an extremely unusual way, she had taken one of the millions who have simply been thrown out of work and perhaps thrown off the dole as well, it might not have been so easy to advise employees to think about their masters.

It is a hard saying, but Miss Bentley might have written a better novel if she were a less generous and sympathetic person. That is, since she was apparently barred by class affiliations from dealing with the real tragedy of the crisis, since she was forced to concern herself with employers rather than workers, she could have attained greater clarity if she had frankly accepted the actions of the manufacturers, honest and dishonest, weak and strong alike, as results of the economic system. But of course, though she would have gained clarity, she would have lost the pervasive tenderness that is one of Miss Bentley's, if not of the book's, virtues. It is rather paradoxical that this tenderness, which makes one look on Miss Bentley as half an ally, is the source of much of the book's weakness. The belief that men are at fault and not the system is the only consolation left for tender minds, and Miss Bentley, for obvious reasons, needs that consolation. If she did not, she would be, I venture to say, on our side.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

No Gold Diggers

WOMAN IN SOVIET RUSSIA, by Fannina Halle. The Viking Press. $4.50. Translated by Margaret Green.

"About 60,000,000 women in Soviet Russia," mused a $4,000 a week movie star, "and not a gold-digger among 'em." No, and no sugar daddies either. It may have meant a long pull, it may mean that women who spent their days in sheltered homes embroidering altar cloths now do their share of work—

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teaching, practicing medicine, running creches, working in the fields and the factories; but with that they have dignity, freedom, equality, and dignified and decent sexual relations. Sex is no longer commercialized in Russia.

Of course the large majority of those women who now do their part in the country's upbuilding are the ones, peasants and factory workers, who before the Revolution had to work as hard as men at lower wages, and look after the household and bear families of maybe eighteen and twenty children in addition.

Before the Revolution in Russia women were among the most downtrodden and subjected section of the populace, and when it came to the fight for emancipation they were among the boldest, least easily intimidated, and most persistent. There are perhaps in all the annals of history no such stirring tales as the stories of the early revolutionary women—Vera Figner, Vera Sassulich, Volkenstein, Ssigida, Perovskaya—who suffered exile, imprisonment, beatings, long separations from their homes and children, to bring about a world in which there would be no more exploitation.

And now in Soviet Russia, as this book convincingly shows, women have shouldered their burden and are working with vigor, courage, enthusiasm, and unshakable faith. Photograph after photograph shows them as mechanic and tractor driver, farmer and bricklayer, teacher and nurse, Red Armyist, sailor, and militia-woman, playing their part in the hard work and sacrifice the present stage still needs.

The author, an Austrian writer, has always in mind an implied comparison with the standards of women in other countries. And she shows that, although more women work in the Soviet Union than elsewhere, they are also incomparably freer in their spiritual life, and there is more dignity in the treatment accorded them by society. A woman can choose whether she will have children or not; she has marriage and "a career"; she is protected by the State from men who desert her, leaving a child; she can get contraceptive information and abortions; and her work of looking after a family is lightened in every possible way by the furthest reaching system of maternity and child welfare than has ever existed in any country. Creches, nursery schools, clinics, and mothers' centers make the "work" of raising a child a delight and "child's play."

When it comes to the sex life of women, Madam Halle shows clearly how many different attitudes flourish; she quotes from modern plays and books as well as reproducing conversations with girls, young mothers, grandmothers, and young children. She goes exhaustively into every side of this problem, too—love, divorce, abortions, promiscuity, the effect of the housing shortage on marriage and family-life. She contrasts the attitudes of the older women, who lived during the Revolution and the civil war, with the lives of earnest, energetic young Comsomolskas now.

Madame Halle repeats one misapprehension of many foreign observers: because life is taken seriously, and because clothes, cosmetics, perfumes are as yet nowhere near the level of those used by middle-class girls in the western world, she deduces that all kinds of lovemaking, courtship, gallantry, flirtation are taboo. It is true there is much serious discussion of these questions (though less now than in 1923-28, the N.E.P. period), but at no time did Russian boys and girls give up the play of lovemaking. Only they did not spend so much time at it as do, let us say, Barbara Hutton and Joan Crawford.

But apart from that, Madame Halle shows that there is a process now going on in Soviet Russia which she describes happily as the rehabilitation of monogamy, — but monogamy based on a new moral outlook. She shows how the decay of the married and family life we know, while it is a destructive decay in capitalist countries, is in the Soviet Union merely the clearing of the path for a different form of relationship, which is already in the midst of experimentation undreamt of—a new form of human relationships based on real equality between the sexes, real comradeship betwen social individuals.

ELLA WINTER.

What America Needs

S. S. UTAH, by Mike Pell. International Publishers. $1.25.

Just between us, I don't know how to review this book. If one of the bourgeois gentlemen came up and said, "Is this what you fellows call literature?" I'd have to admit it wasn't a masterpiece. And yet it isn't woodpulp writing; it isn't Saturday Evening Post writing; it's miles beyond Atlantic Monthly writing. I can't place it (we have to place everything) and I say to myself that it really isn't good and yet there I am, hanging on for dear life, excited and held by the thing.

Someone has suggested that it is worker's correspondence and that seems to fit it exactly. It is Mike Pell's story of what happened on an American ship after Slim got through with it. Slim is an able-bodied seaman and an able-bodied Communist, one of those obnoxious fellows who think that even a sailor should have something to eat and a clean place to sleep. On the top of that, the boat makes the mistake of putting in at Leningrad. When they get away from there the whole crew is innoculated with that mysterious buoyancy which annoys Brother Walsh, S.J., so extremely. The result is a Red Front made up of the men from the black gang, the fo'castle, the galley and even from the ranks of the officers. It builds up to a stirring climax with the strike breaking out as the ship tries to dock at New York.

What makes it good is the way Mike Pell tells it. Because he does it naturally and with no attempt at writing tricks, it has the air of reality. You see the men groping their way along in their organizational problems, making up their tactics as they proceed. Just when you decide that Pell is merely a good reporter (no imagination, no inner flame, etc., etc., etc.), he gives you the scene of the passengers dining in the saloon. It's very fine satire. If this is worker's correspondence, maybe what America needs is more worker's correspondence. It may not be literature, but it reads like Dashiell Hammett and I'm crazy about it.

ROBERT FORSYTHE.

The Man on Top

THE MAN OF THE RENAISSANCE, by Ralph Roder. The Viking Press. $3.50.

Apparently, from the note on the inside cover, the author does not care to have emphasized the fact that he was once a man of the theater. Yet no book I have ever read shows so clearly the influence of the stage. Without any of the characteristic divisions of a play, and in spite of a careful avoidance even of the language of the stage, the book is theatrical in more than the usual sense of the word. Each situation is set like a scene on a stage; the entrances are contrived dramatically; and every section ends with a graceful or witty or significant last line, like the exit lines in a well writen play. And although the action has all of Italy to roam in, one feels always within walls, always confronted by painted scenery.

Nevertheless, this is not to say that the book is dramatic in the favorable sense of the word. There is, in fact, too much scenery and too much acting. Few books in recent years have been so compltely and deliberately rhetor-

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ical and few show so comprehensively the virtues and vices of a rhetorical style.

Sentences full of rich sonority, brightly colored, picturesque and admirable for the deft placing of every component word are to be found in every paragraph. Excellent examples of every rhetorical device may be sought here. But it is the peculiarity of rhetoric that one misstep cancels a score of hits. For artifice cannot bear exposure. Such a howler as "ears pink with prayer," or "the silken whispers of a budding beard," or "the rhythmic loquacity of voluble waters," ruins the entire passage it is set in. And one persistent fault, overwriting, is present throughout the book. A man cannot simply go to a door, here; he must go with gestures, nods, looks over the shoulder, scrapings of the feet, halted bows, and so on; till the swollen paragraphs are fit to burst.

The title of the book epitomizes its purpose, but the purpose remains unfulfilled. Mr. Roeder writes in his foreword: "The four figures that follow (Savonarola, Machiavelli, Castiglione, Aretino) illustrate four phases of the moral life of their age, and, taken together, they compose the man of the Renaissance. . . . The ascetic virtue of Savonarola, the expedient virtue of Machiavelli, the convivial virtue of Castiglione, the animal virtue of Aretino—what are these but the final solutions of those who fear life, those who accept, those who compromise with it, and those who succumb to it."

Do these characters sum up the composite man of any historical period? Blend them as much as he can, intertwine them however artfully, the author's choice remains arbitrary, and the composition does not set. Any four figures could have done as well; and Mr. Roeder's four, far from commingling, fly apart and remain individuals, and when the book is finished, we have four portraits, not one. Moreover, Mr. Roeder is himself unable to keep to his pattern. Of the four, two become quite dim, subordinate characters in fact, while two of the figures who were not intended to be principals become principals in their place — Isabella D'Este and Caesar Borgia.

The man of the Renaissance, Mr. Roder may tell us, is, for the purpose of understanding a civilization, the man on the top, and it is not necessary to portray, even by way of contrast, the man at the bottom; yet, the omission of the man at the bottom gives the book a sense of insubstantiality. These princes, popes, courtiers and politicians who hold the stage become, as the book goes on, more and more literary figures and unreal. They lose even the formal reality of historical characters, because they are not sufficiently backgrounded with contemporary atmosphere and circumstance. Kept out of the life of their time, they have no life to keep.

Mr. Roeder refusing, or failing to see his characters in relation to the economic and social forces of their time, misses, as a result, the clues to his characters. Italian history in the Renaissance, if illuminated by the Marxist dialectic, would not be the confusion it is in Mr. Roeder's pages; and the actors in it would be seen to be, not the pawns of chaos, but the figures in an arranged and irresistible course of economic destiny.

Sometimes Mr. Roeder is blind not only to the implications, but to the very substance of his material. For instance, in the discussion of Savonarola, his influence over the people of Florence and his later loss of power is laid to his constancy and their perversity. To use human perversity to explain anything is, however, an evasion of the historian's task. The explanation lies in the speeches Mr. Roeder quotes and which he ignores as he quotes them. "The poor are oppressed by taxes and when they pay intolerable sums, the rich cry: Give me the rest. When widows come weeping, they are told, Go to bed. When the poor complain, they are told: Pay! Pay!" In everyone of Savonarola's sermons there was this note of social protest. Machiavelli's religious revolution, because it gave the poor a rallying cry against their oppressors, became a social revolution, powerful enough to overthrow the Medici. The revolution failed, ultimately, because the leader betrayed it. Machiavelli, himself, stopped the revolution midway with the result that he lost the lower classes in disillusion and could not gain the undeceived upper classes. He died not because he was a saint, but because he was an ineffective revolutionist.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Pianist as Patriot

PADEREWSKI, THE STORY OF A MODERN IMMORTAL, by Charles Phillips. Macmillan. $4.

Mr. Phillips' book, first published by Macmillan in 1933 for circulation by, and the benefit of, the Kosciuscko Foundation, is now issued for the general reading public. The intense interest of the Kosciuscko Foundation in this glorification of a Polish patriot may well be imagined, for here is given, in flowery verbiage, an ecstatic, rhapsodic, composite picture of all those characteristics to which an intense nationalist might aspire. What a flood of emotions must surge in the breast of any Polish patriot perusing this book, especially of one who would "do anything for his native land, except live in it!" Here his nostalgic longings are portrayed with tearful sympathy; his dreams of freedom from alien oppression are pictured in an eventual consummation, in which, in the mind of the author at least, all Poland's problems are solved — if only the "crafty" Pilsudski can be kept in check.

To make clear the "protean" many-sidedness of Paderewski, Phillips has divided his biography into two stories, "the story of an artist and the story of a statesman, the story of a genius of music and of a genius of statecraft." In order to bring the superman he portrays into clearer perspective, he continues: "these two stories . . . are woven and intertwined . . . Together they make a great symphony."

Mr. Phillips warns us that he knows little about music. Yet the most weighty judgments (even when contrary to the expressed opinion of critics, who, of course, are wrong or biased, perhaps both) are proffered at every point, whether in considering Paderewski's playing or his compositions. We are told that the origin of Paderewski's Symphony (b minor; Opus 24) had its roots in the emotions awakened by his witnessing a scene of Czarist depredation, before Paderewski was three years of age. "*This symphony, one of the greatest of modern compositions,* is of monumental proportions; played in full, it requires an hour and a half to perform. But in that hour and a half is compacted a lifetime's experience for the hearer, the tragic history of a whole people, the universal cry of humanity for freedom . . . " It is scarcely necessary to remark that the italicized judgment is not generally accepted as true; nor is it ever likely to appear that Paderewski's compositions are other than the creations of an intensely nationalistic, reactionary creative musical mind.

In writing on politics, Phillips is extremely naïve, and he pre-supposes a colossal gullibility on the part of his readers. The "red menace" of Soviet Russia skulks behind every political episode. "The Bolshevists," Paderewski declared, "were fighting not Poland, but civilization. It is a war against the tooth brush." Again: "the uncivilized world of Red Russia, egged on by Germany . . . " and "a Red Russia that even then was spending millions in its efforts to corrupt the Polish voter and rouse proletarian animosity in Poland." And when, in 1920, during the civil war in Russia, incited by the Allies, Pilsudski carried on an aggressive campaign against the Soviets, marching into Russia, capturing Kiev, advancing upon Moscow, finally returning to Poland in one of the greatest retreats in all history, we are told that this was a "Bolshevik invasion," in which Poland was menaced by the "Red wave of the Bolsheviks."

That part of the biography dealing with Paderewski's valiant and successful attempts to raise funds for the relief of Poland and to enlist the assistance of the Allies in obtaining her freedom, through the inclusion of Polish autonomy in Wilson's fourteen points, is an interesting piece of straight reporting which deals in a realistic manner with the recorded facts. As soon, however, as the author turns from the factual evidence to inject the personal observations of an exceedingly idealistic, prejudiced mind, the value of the account is lessened and sometimes completely nullified. The freedom of Poland, with a "government acceptable to the Allies," seems to be, from the

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author's and Paderewski's viewpoint, the end and aim of all humanity, and with that accomplished, Poland's problems are presumably solved for all time. With amazing lack of appreciation for the portent of the words, he quotes, from Madame Paderewski, an example of the changed conditions when at last Poland has a constitutional government. The scene occurs at the time of the first general election: "In a most orderly way thousands and thousands of Polish citizens, hungry, in rags, are standing patiently in line for many hours, their bare feet in the snow, shivering from cold, waiting for their turn to cast a ballot." They asked for bread, and were given the vote!

The only way to understand the achievements of Paderewski is to recognize his tremendously dominating personality, whether in contact with individuals or masses of people, on the concert platform or at the Peace Conference. Through intense sincerity, coupled with charm of personality and tenacity of purpose, he can communicate conviction to others, even when the ideas represented spring from nationalistic feeling. H has an idealistic love of freedom, but lacks the vision that might have elevated him above patriotism into a position of genuine leadership. The figure which Phillips has elevated for our consideration is an engrossing and noble one, but the pedestal upon which he has placed it is far too vast.

ASHLEY PETTIS.

Valentines

NORMAN TO PAUL

Ah, Paul, but you're a lucky fellow
To stand in good with Fiorello.
And yet, I must point out, the fact is
You have not followed S.P. practice.
You should have waited till the hour
When Socialists had come in power.
For treason that technique's the best;
See: Ebert, Ramsay, and the rest.

TO JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

(*With a copy of Lenin's pamphlet on Marx*)

For years you railed at Marx without
An idea what he wrote about .
At last you found—we'll give you credit—
The Manifesto, and you read it.
And now before more years go by
We warmly beg of you to try
This simple pamphlet: concentration
May give you yet an education.

TO EDMUND WILSON

Dear Edmund—or, as friends say, "Bunny"—
Your conduct's ludicrous, not funny.
I note with grief your wavering track:
First one step forward, then two back,
One to the left and two to the right,
A slight advance, then hasty flight.
Alas, you have the liberal habit,
Which seems to make you plain welch-rabbit!

MARGARET WRIGHT MATHER.

The Theatre

CONFUSION and fear seem at last entirely to have overcome Philip Barry, whose latest drama, *The Joyous Season,* recently opened at the Belasco Theatre.

Barry has been experimenting with situations that have called for the posing of one kind of personality against another, apparently with the idea that there was a stage arithmetic in which two and two, if they were added together often enough, would equal philosophy. In a quite wide variety of plays, such as *The Animal Kingdom, Tomorrow and Tomorrow* and *Hotel Universe,* among his later works, he has put any number of men and women through their paces, always with an expectation that their experiences would add up to something, provided he could keep them talking about their experiences, in a highly literate way, for a whole evening.

He has trotted out several styles of young business men and women, of young literati, male and female, and of young husbands and wives, also male and female — all suffering from some polite phase of the disease of social disillusionment. But in all these fairly intimate recitations Barry has achieved nothing more than a highly practised literary nuance.

Now, in *The Joyous Season,* with a better-than-average Broadway cast, headed by Lillian Gish, he has started in a direction that is perhaps not expected of a leading American playwright in 1934, but that is not so surprising as many of Barry's admirers may think. In "The Joyous Season" Barry has joined Eugene O'Neill at the altar of the Catholic Church.

Furthermore, it is the first step that Barry has taken that anyone could call definite. It is a step backward, after years of marking time on the deep rugs of steam-heated sitting rooms or studios of the stage. But it is not less definite for being backward. These are the days when people are letting it be known where they stand.

It looks as if Barry, for one, were giving up his search for some new formula regarding human relations and were running to cover.

The Story of *The Joyous Season* is optimistic. It deals first with an ingrowing smugness that threatens to destroy the morale of the Farley family, of Boston, then with the dispersal of this tendency almost overnight and then with the implication, when specific evidence is lacking, that the original Farley spirit will prevail. The theme is stated by Sister Christina.

She is a young nun who is shocked at the deteriorating smugness of her brothers and sisters when she visits them at Christmas time after several years' absence. She triumphs over their bickering and their general grossness of perception.

Sister Christina is more than a casual personal heroine. She states a creed. And it is not an accident that Barry has chosen a nun to express the burden of his intended sermon on this occasion, after all those years given over to the painstaking characterization of people whose lives could hardly contain a real answer to a major question.

After all those years of drifting and guessing, in which he once stumbled across the story of Elijah and appropriated a line from it as the text of a modern play, Barry has finally come to the point where he is willing to invent a woman who will make a hypodermic injection seem virtuous; he invents a beautiful and eloquent nun to shoot the Church into his arm.

The characters of *The Joyous Season* include a younger brother of the Farley family who in his recent past, we are told, has been a Communist. By the time the audience encounters him he, too, is disillusioned. Belief in something is essential to this character. He is in distress at not being able to believe any longer in the possibilities of the social revolution. Yet the fact of disillusionment here is established by Barry with no animus. And the reason that there is no animus is that Barry wants to make as strong as possible his point about Sister Christina.

His point is that she is the only character in the aggregation who, in addition to a mere

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acceptance of the business of living, can also believe in living, and with gusto.

The significance of this particular comparison by Barry, under these circumstances, will be obvious. WILLIAM GARDENER.

Brief Review

She Loves Me Not. In a farce that is fantastic to the point of lunacy, four Princeton students, with honorable intent, place themselves in a compromising position by harboring a dizzy young night club entertainer who is a fugitive from justice. Hollywood, the Senate, the Princeton faculty and a Sat-Eve-Post version of the radical movement become involved.

Mary of Scotland. The Theatre Guild gives a handsome production to Maxwell Anderson's eloquently poetic historical drama, with Helen Hayes, Philip Merivale and Helen Mencken. Historical factors, highly dramatic in themselves and essential to an understanding of Scotland's young Catholic queen and her feud with Britain's Protestant Elizabeth, are slighted in favor of personal sentiment. Among those present is John Knox, one of history's thunderers.

The Green Bay Tree. In spite of intermittent cleverness and elegance of setting, this Jed Harris importation from England is at bottom a serious plea for sympathy for unsexed young men. The particular young man in this case is the pampered ward of a wealthy male degenerate and dilettante, who has brought him up in a condition of complete dependency, unfitting him for work or normal relations of any kind. When the youth falls in love he lacks the stamina to break with his jealous foster parent and found a home of his own with the girl. Nor is his enslavement ended with the older man's death; when the play ends he is making elaborately fastidious preparations to carry on the traditions of the dead bachelor's household.

Ah, Wilderness! Eugene O'Neill goes back to the old home town in writing a thoughtfully amusing comedy about a boy's growing pains in 1906. The play is enlivened with a stream of detailed observation, which, from the actor's side, is duck soup for George M. Cohan, who plays the father of the family. Cohan's career as an actor has been notoriously cheapened by his highly profitable flag-waving; whenever the army has blown the bugle, Cohan has been a Tin Pan Alley patriot. But Cohan, more than any other actor, is responsible for *genre* being an admired and successful method of stage art in America. For years, among the American acting fraternity, in the matter of technique, he has been a soft-spoken Hemingway with a sense of humor. He was the pioneer. The conspicuously "hard-boiled" school of actors, with its corner-of-the-mouth imitation of the underworld and points west, is the unregenerate product of an acting style that sowed its own seed. His genial father in *Ah, Wilderness!* is his best performance.

The Pursuit of Happiness. Sometimes lamely obvious and at other times lively, this is an irreverent comedy about New England home life in the period of the first American Revolution. Besides telling things about the Hessian soldiery that American school books have suppressed, it is informative on another suppressed subject, namely, the genesis and technique of bundling. The respectable young ladies of colonial New England took their suitors to bed with them, on cold winter evenings, to save fuel. They were not supposed to undress.

W. G.

"I ALWAYS DID WANT TO BE A MISSIONARY!" — *Adolf Dehn*

Current Films

Hi Nellie—Paul Muni. Hokum melodrama about a newspaperman. Vigorous direction by Mervyn Le Roy and expert acting may entertain, though they reveal nothing about the inside of a metropolitan newspaper.

You Can't Buy Everything—May Robson, Lewis Stone. The story of a money-mad woman financier who destroys banks and engineers Wall Streets coups, but finds, alack and alas that mother love comes before love of money, and that it's better to be a loved shop girl than an unloved millionaire.

All of Me—Frederick Marsh and Miriam Hopkins. Where the Park Avenue couple learn all about true love from the boy and girl in the slums.

Four Frightened People—Directed by Cecil De Mille. About four white people lost in the jungle and trying to get back to civilization. Two men and a woman, of course. And Mary Boland to supply the comedy. Synthetic scenario. And De Mille manages to get a bath tub scene even in the impenetrable jungle.

Massacre—Richard Barthelmess. A middle-of-the road-liberal expose of the exploitation and oppression of the American Indian by business interests. Inadequate documentation. Fair entertainment.

Fugitive Lovers—Robert Montgomery. The Grand Hotel theme on a transcontinental bus. Hokum slickly directed, creates suspense. N. A.

Announcements

The first of the meetings mentioned in last week's NEW MASSES, to give "direct practical aid" to the German Communist Party will take place Feb. 11 at the Bronx Coliseum, at 8 p. m. Earl Browder, general secretary of the Communist Party, is the main speaker. Proceeds go to the illegal German Communist Party for literature, leaflets, etc. Browder will analyze the German situation. Clarence Hathaway, editor of the Daily Worker, will be chairman. Tickets are on sale at the NEW MASSES and are $1 for reserved seats and 40c, in advance, for others.

A musical evening featuring a contemporary Soviet composition by Schostakowitsch, to be performed for the first time in America, is announced for Feb. 15, at 8:15 p. m., at the Washington Irving High School. The Repertory Playhouse Associates will present Alfred Kreymborg's mass recital, *America, America!* which appeared in the Feb. 6 issue of the NEW MASSES.

The final program in the showing of films on the history of the Soviet Films arranged by the Film and Photo League and the New Masses will be given Saturday, Feb. 17 at the New School for Social Research, 66 West 12th Street, New York, at 7 p. m. and 9:30 p. m., when *A Jew at War* will be shown. Admission is 50 cents.

An entertainment and dance for the benefit of the Scottsboro Defense will be given at the Savoy, 140th Street and Lenox Avenue, Feb. 16. Admission is 85 cents and tickets bought in advance net a larger percentage to the Scottsboro defense. Tickets may be bought at the book shop of A. G. Dill, 236 West 135th Street, or at the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York.

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